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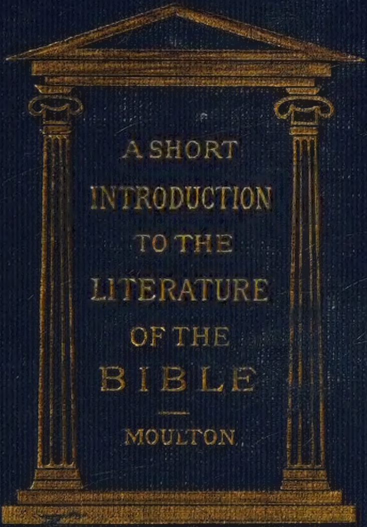

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE

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A SHORT
INTRODUCTION
TO
THE LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE

BY

RICHARD G. MOULTON, M.A. (CAMB.), PH.D. (PENNA.)
Professor of Literature (in English) in the University of Chicago; Late Lecturer in Literature to Cambridge University (Extension), and to the London and the American Societies for the Extension of University Teaching
Author of "The Literary Study of the Bible," etc.; Editor of "The Modern Reader's Bible"

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1909

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PREFACE

I WISH to explain that this volume is not an abridgement of my other work on *The Literary Study of the Bible.* There is necessarily much in common between two treatments of the same topic: but the purposes of the two are distinct. The larger work is intended for formal students; it is an illustration of literary morphology in the field of sacred Scripture. The present book is addressed to the general reader, whether more or less cultured; it avoids technicalities, and treats the matter of the Bible, approaching this from the literary side. In what sense I understand the word 'literary' — as distinguished from theological and critical — I have sufficiently explained in the opening section.

Many things have convinced me that we are entering upon a new era of popular interest in the sacred Scriptures. My duties as a lecturer have brought me in contact with many different types of audiences in different parts of England and America. No single thing has impressed me more than the commonness of the remark — coming usually from persons who were neither uneducated nor irreligious — that the Bible (except for a few passages) had long been a sealed book to them, but that they were taking to it again. We have done almost everything that is possible with these Hebrew and Greek writings. We have overlaid them, clause by clause, with exhaustive commentaries; we have translated them, revised the translations, and quarrelled over the revisions;

we have discussed authenticity and inspiration, and suggested textual history with the aid of coloured type; we have mechanically divided the whole into chapters and verses, and sought texts to memorise and quote; we have epitomised into handbooks and extracted school lessons; we have recast from the feminine point of view, and even from the standpoint of the next century. There is yet one thing left to do with the Bible: simply to read it. To give an impetus to this last is the main purpose of the present book.

It may, however, be desired by some to use a work of this kind as an assistance in their studies. What help I have offered in this way has been reserved for an appendix. It is a sound principle that the sustained attention necessary for literary reading and appreciation should be kept distinct from the attitude of examination and reference which is implied in every kind of study. Possibly those who merely turn over the pages of this appendix may think the reading lists over-elaborate and detailed. I would point out that this is so only in appearance; and the reason is that the numbering of chapters and verses in ordinary Bibles in no way agrees with the actual structure, which necessitates a re-indexing of the divisions proper for literary study. One who uses an edition in which the proper structure is presented to the eye will hardly need the help of reading lists. In a second appendix I have endeavoured to meet the requests I am accustomed to receive for advice as to progressive study in biblical literature.

RICHARD G. MOULTON.

CHICAGO, December, 1900.

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INTRODUCTION

THE LITERARY STUDY OF THE BIBLE AS DISTINCT FROM THEOLOGY AND CRITICISM

INTRODUCTION

THE LITERARY STUDY OF THE BIBLE AS DISTINCT FROM THEOLOGY AND CRITICISM

It is a purpose of this book to distinguish what will be here called the Literary Study of the Bible from other studies; more particularly from theology, and from that historical treatment which chiefly at the present time is associated with biblical criticism. It may be convenient to approach this distinction from the side of illustration. I will take the fourth and fifth chapters of *Judges*, describing the oppression of Israel under Jabin king of Canaan and their deliverance by Deborah and Barak, as a portion of Scripture in which the three treatments may well be compared.

The first type of study accepts the canonical books of Scripture as a foundation for theology and a manual of devotion. To a student of this order it is a shock to find within the sacred volume an incident involving cold-blooded assassination with treacherous violation of hospitality, not brought forward to be denounced, or even palliated, but displayed with evident exultation. Such a circumstance is calculated to raise the reflection: Is the Bible to be understood as a theological system, in which every section is a fragment of complete truth? or does the Bible comprise a theological evolution, bringing to view immature strugglings after right, as well as its complete revelation? This is not the place to discuss such a question: that it is raised by a particular portion of Scripture is sufficient illustration of the first study.

For a second department of Bible study matters of history are the chief concern. Who are the authors of the books of Scripture? What periods produced them? Have we the original form in which the books appeared, or have they been compiled out of earlier materials? What evidence do the different parts of the Bible thus carry as to the life of the far past? A student interested in questions like these will seize upon the differences between the fourth and fifth chapters of *Judges*, both treating the same incident: differences so great that the writer of the fifth chapter can hardly be supposed to have had the fourth chapter before him. The discussion will naturally arise as to whether *The Book of Judges* was the original composition of a single author, or whether it may not be made up of traditional poems, like the Song of Deborah in the fifth chapter, and later history, like that of the fourth, with or without an editor to bring the parts together.

The third type I am calling literary study. No doubt the word 'literary' is used in many different senses: what I have in mind is the study of the various forms of which a literature is made up. When we speak of 'Greek literature' or 'English literature' every one thinks of certain dramas, epics, philosophical works, histories, poems, stories, and the like, produced by the Greek or English peoples. If then the Bible is to be called 'literature,' we ought to expect to find in it dramas, stories, philosophical works, histories, songs, and similar forms of literature. Where these are the chief interest of a student he will delight to distinguish, in the fourth chapter of *Judges* plain history, in the fifth an outpouring of brilliant lyric poetry. Not only is this lyric poetry, but it can be referred to the particular species of lyric known as 'ballad'—a technical term implying that musical accompaniment and dance movements are still in use. To such a literary student the mode of performance will not seem unimportant, and in the opening words, "Then sang Deborah and Barak," he will recognise interchange between a Chorus of Women led by Deborah and a Chorus of Men led by Barak. Fresh interest is added to every detail of the song when its antiphonal structure has thus been caught. The men are chanting dolefully—

In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
    In the days of Jael,
The highways were unoccupied,
    And the travellers walked through byways;
The rulers ceased in Israel,
    They ceased—

The Chorus of Women break in—

Until that I, Deborah, arose,
    That I arose a mother in Israel.

The Chorus of Men call on all ranks of men to rejoice:—

Tell of it, ye that ride on white asses,
Ye that sit on rich carpets,
    And ye that walk by the way:—

the Chorus of Women appeal similarly to all women:—

Far from the noise of archers,
    In the places of drawing water:—
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord,
    Even the righteous acts of his rule in Israel.

The two Choruses break off to encourage one another : —

Men. Awake, awake, Deborah,
Awake, awake, utter a song : —
Women. Arise, Barak,
And lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.

The mustering of the tribes no longer reads as a mere catalogue, but is alive with snatches of spirited rivalry.

Women. Out of Ephraim came down they whose root is in Amalek —
Men. After thee, Benjamin, among thy peoples —
Women. Out of Machir came down governors —
Men. And out of Zebulun they that handle the marshal's staff —
Women. And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah —
Men. As was Issachar, so was Barak :
All. Into the valley they rushed forth at his feet.

It appears how one of the tribes changed its mind. Th men are singing heroically, —

By the watercourses of Reuben
There were great RESOLVES of heart !

The women break in, with sarcastic interruption : —

Why satest thou among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks ?

The men change their description by a single word : —

At the watercourses of Reuben
There were great *searchings* of heart !

As the song proceeds we have the Chorus of Men telling how kings came to fight, the Chorus of Women answering that the stars in their courses fought against them : the men's song gives to the ear the prancing of the horses in the flooded plain, the women burst out with the disappointment of spectators when one of the allies fails to play its part. It is men and warriors who dilate upon the more than military hard-heartedness of Jael.

Cold murder.

Blessed above women shall Jael be, the wife of Heber the Kenite,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent!
He asked water, and she gave him milk;
She brought him butter in a lordly dish.
She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera,
She smote through his head,
Yea, she pierced and struck through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay:
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

To the Chorus of Women is left the essentially feminine touch of fancying the mother of Sisera awaiting his return.

Through the window she looked forth, and cried,
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice,
"Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?"
Her wise ladies answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
"Have they not found,
Have they not divided the spoil?
A damsel, two damsels to every man;
To Sisera a spoil of divers colours,
A spoil of divers colours of embroidery,
Of divers colours of embroidery on both sides, on the necks of the spoil?"

Both Choruses unite in a final outburst of glory to God.

So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:
But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might!

Prayer to the Lord for Enemies.

The literary study of the Bible thus seeks the new light which will come into any passage of Scripture when it is read in accordance with its exact literary form. So described, however, the study is apt to leave on some minds the impression that it is something superficial or technical, remote in its interest from those who are seeking the matter and spirit of Holy Scripture. It therefore becomes necessary to lay down this fundamental principle: That a clear grasp of the outer literary form is an essential condition for understanding the matter and spirit of literature. There need be nothing to cause surprise in such a statement. In comparison with the profound questions of theology, or the far-reaching view of the historian, how superficial and trifling appear the niceties of grammar and syntax! Yet every one understands that to read Scripture with faulty ideas of its grammar and syntax would be to run the risk of fundamental errors in theological or historical inferences. A similar risk is run by those who are seeking to draw theology or history out of a scripture of which they have ignored the literary structure.

To take simple illustrations. A reader is using a chapter of the Bible as a devotional exercise, striving to bring home to his heart what he reads as a Divine message. He has omitted to note that the portion of *Job* from which he has selected his chapter opened with the words, "Then answered Bildad the Shuhite;" and, in the final chapter of the book, God is represented as declaring that this Bildad and the other friends of Job "have not spoken of him the thing that is right." Thus this devotional exercise is seeking to realise as God's message the words of a speaker whom God himself expressly repudiates. The mistake has arisen simply from overlooking the dramatic form of the book; in other literature the details represent the author's sentiments, in drama they represent the sentiments which the author has put into the mouth of another, possibly of one who is the opposite of himself. The author of *Job* is no more responsible for the sentiments of Bildad than Shakespeare is to be credited with the horrible thoughts of Iago.

Or again, suppose *The Book of the Prophet Micah* is being read, and at a particular point (vii. 7) the reader is conscious of a total transformation in the spirit of the passage, from deep depression to confidence and exultation. If the interpreter falls into the prevalent habit of looking only to history for explanation of such changes, he will probably cry out that the new passage is an 'interpolation' from some later age, different in its surroundings from the gloomier times of Micah; he will follow Wellhausen in saying that between verses 6 and 7 "there yawns a century." To one who does not ignore literary structure it will be evident that what yawns between the verses is nothing more than a change in dramatic speakers. The prophecy has been introduced (vi. 9) by a title-verse: "The voice of the LORD crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom will see thy name." In other words, we are led to expect a dramatic scene, in which one of the speakers will be the 'Man of Wisdom.' Immediately following the title we have (verses 10–16) the denunciation and woe with which God cries to the city; next we have the despair (vii. 1–6) of the doomed city; at the critical verse the 'Man of Wisdom' speaks — the righteous man on whose behalf God is interposing: —

> But as for me, I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. . . . Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise.

The dramatic scene continues, with natural connection of thought, to the end of the prophecy. Thus errors of history may be made, as well as mistakes in devotional exercises, through inattention to the literary structure of what is read.

It might perhaps be objected that the distinction between dramatic and other literature is so broad a difference of form that mistakes like those cited would not often be made. But the smallest points of literary structure may serve as a key to interpretation. The ordinary reader would probably think it a finely drawn and purely technical question to dispute whether a particular passage should be printed in 'asyndetic sentences' or in 'the envelope figure.' Yet the determination of this point will make a great difference even in a familiar passage of 'The Lord's Prayer.' The first part of this prayer is usually arranged in entirely independent sentences: —

> Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

The same words may be arranged in an 'envelope figure,' in which the first and last lines are closely related, while what comes between is read in the light of both.

Our Father which art in heaven:
Hallowed be thy Name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy Will be done,
In earth as it is in heaven.

According to the first arrangement the words, "in earth as it is in heaven," are connected only with the petition, "Thy will be done." According to the envelope arrangement the words must be associated with all three petitions; the sense now becomes this: Hallowed be thy Name in earth as it is in heaven, Thy Kingdom come in earth as it is in heaven, Thy Will be done in earth as it is in heaven. So much of force can be brought out of so slight a variation of form even in what is so familiar.

The fundamental connection between the outer structure and the inner spirit, while it applies to all literature, yet stands in need of special assertion in regard to the Bible, owing to extraordinary circumstances connected with the transmission of the sacred word. The Bible has come down to us as the worst-printed book in the world. Not only modern literature, but even such as the literature of ancient Greece, if given out in modern times, will be printed in a manner which conveys the literary structure directly to the eye. If the work be a drama, the speeches are separated and the names of speakers inserted; if it be a poem, verse and line divisions will be made obvious; in essays or histories there will be at least titles and proper divisions into sections. But, though the Bible is proclaimed to be one of the world's great literatures, yet if we open our ordinary versions we find that the literary form is that of a scrap book: a succession of numbered sentences, with divisions into longer or shorter chapters, under which all trace of dramatic, lyric, story, essay, is hopelessly lost. Nor is it difficult to understand how this has come about. The Old Testament goes back to an antiquity in which the representation of structure to the eye had not been invented. The original authors were succeeded by rabbinical, and later by monastic interpreters, to whom we are indebted for their reverent care in the preservation of the sacred word, but with whom there was no conception of Scripture as literature. It was an Age of Commentary, and to the rabbinical and mediæval commentators each separate clause of Scripture was enough as a starting point for discussion. From their hands, then, the Bible emerged in the form of numbered texts-for-comment; and for most readers that is the form which the Bible still wears. Recovery from a tradition of twenty centuries is naturally slow. When King James's version of the Bible was made, the scholars of that age did not even know that parts of the Bible were in verse. The distinction between prose and verse in Hebrew was rediscovered a century later. The 'Revised Lectionary' of the Anglican Church, in our own day, took the step of presenting lessons unhampered by chapter divisions; later still the 'Revised Version' broke away from numbered texts, and printed parts of Scripture in the form of poetic verse. But it is still left for individual effort, in such works as *The Modern Reader's Bible*, to undertake the task of presenting Holy Scripture in the full literary structure which for all other literature is a matter of course. It will be clear, then, that the Bible student, more than any other, needs the type of study which uses literary form as a key to interpretation.

Three modes of treatment then — theological, historical, literary — are essential, if our study of the Bible is to be adequate. I go on to the observation that, in practice, the three studies must be kept distinct. The perspective of things in the three is so different, the objects sought and the methods followed are so unlike, that no good can come of the attempt to carry them on together. The endless bickering and disputation, with its personal questions and heresy trials, which at the present time disturbs the peace of the biblical world, is mainly due to the fact that the two studies of history and of theology have been allowed to become entangled. Questions such as the authorship of *Isaiah*, or the structural origin of the Pentateuch, are, it is admitted, issues of historical fact, and by historical methods alone can they be properly investigated. Yet in practice every stage of the investigation is scanned from varying theological standpoints; party spirit comes in, and one historical investigator turns into a champion for a creed, another has a mission to expose the hollowness of tradition. Meanwhile, history has lost the 'dry light' without which scientific inquiry is impossible, and theology itself suffers in its single-mindedness. It is equally impracticable to mingle in the same treatment literary and historic study: the appreciation of what the Bible is, and the analytic examination of possible ways by which it has become what it is. Take for example *The Book of Deuteronomy*, and assume any one of the competing theories as to its history: let it be supposed that the book is entirely the composition of the historic Moses, and that it represents exactly what took place in his day; or let it be supposed that *Deuteronomy* is a pious fiction of a later age; or again, that round a nucleus of tradition imaginative matter has gathered. How is it possible that any one of these theories can affect what is a matter of simple literary fact, that our *Deuteronomy* stands as a succession of orations and songs, presenting the Farewell of Moses to the People of Israel? Yet, in practice, perplexing details in the Book of the Covenant — an appendix to the Deuteronomic orations — have been allowed to thrust out of view altogether the most magnificent oratory enshrining the most pathetic of all dramatic situations. Let the theologian, the historian, the literary interpreter, pursue undisturbed their independent paths of study. We shall know in the event how to harmonise ourselves with three aspects of truth. But to struggle along a course of three incompatible methods will bring us to no goal but that of confusion.

The present work, then, is devoted to the literary study of the Bible in the distinct sense in which I have explained the term. Literary classics carry on their surface enough of history and of theology for their interpretation; further questions of historic origin, or bearing upon systematic theology, belong to other branches of study. To *read about* literature is easy: it is much more difficult to *read it.* The ultimate aim of this book is to assist in reading the Bible, such reading being implied as seeks the full light that comes from clearly presented literary structure. One remark may be added. A man may be said to have read a history or a legal document when he understands it; of literature his reading is not complete until he has come to love it. This book will have failed in its main purpose if it does not give assistance — to those who may need assistance — in perceiving that the Bible, as it is the most sacred, is also the most interesting of literatures.

PART FIRST

BIBLICAL HISTORY AND STORY

I. HISTORY AND STORY

II. THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AS PRESENTED BY THEMSELVES

III. THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AS PRESENTED BY ITSELF

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND STORY

History and Story as Literary Terms

At the threshold of our subject lies a literary distinction of great importance: the distinction between history and story. Both are narrative: history is narrative addressed to our sense of record and the explanation of things, story is narrative appealing directly to the imagination and emotions. There is much misconception on this subject. It is usually supposed that story is imaginary incident: in reality, it is incident that is addressed to the imagination. Invented matter cannot be part of history; but the converse of this is not true, for matter of fact can perfectly well be worked up into the form of story. The question is not as to the nature of the matter, but as to the mode in which it is narrated.

The distinction can be well appreciated by one who reads continuously through *The Book of Genesis*. He feels the literature he is following shift its character backwards and forwards. At times he is occupied with strings of proper names, that carry him through successive generations of men or mutual connections of races; or in a few lines are narrated revolutions that may cover centuries. He comes upon the name of Joseph, and it is as if a curtain were suddenly lifted: the reader is in the midst of real life, warm with human interest and fluctuating passions.

A strong personality is apparent, making itself felt under the most varied circumstances. Joseph is at first the clever child of a large family, too untutored in life to veil his superiority. With boyish self-consciousness he must needs tell his dreams of his brethren's sheaves bowing down before his sheaf, or of the sun and moon and eleven stars doing obeisance; his brothers envy and hate him, his doting father rebukes, but bears in mind and looks for further revelations. Opportunity betrays Joseph to his brethren away from all help, and they prepare to slay him; opportunity is encountered by opportunity, and they are able to sell their brother to travellers, and make gain out of revenge. A slave in Egypt, Joseph none the less makes his personality felt: Potiphar puts his whole household under Joseph's management, and knows not aught that is with him save the bread which he eats. But the same attractiveness which wins men wins women also; Joseph finds himself entangled in a false charge and thrown into prison. Yet in prison, as everywhere else, Joseph soon rules: whatever is done there, he is the doer of it. And when he is by marvellous chance delivered and brought before Pharaoh, Joseph has not concluded his first speech at court before emperor and courtiers are saying, Can we find such a one as this, in whom the spirit of God is?

To character interest other elements of story beauty are added in the narrative that centres around Joseph. Manners of the primitive home; pastoral life, with long-continued wandering of herds and flocks from station to distant station; mercantile caravans crossing deserts, Egypt with its military organisation, its luxury and intrigue, its underground prison life, its noble river fringed with the reed-grass out of which monsters may be dreamed of as issuing; court life with its pomp of gold chains and fine vesture, and runners crying, 'Bow the knee': all these varied types of the picturesque are just sketched in to make a background for the movement of events. The realm of mystery encircling the real world is touched in dreams, the fanciful forms of which may be read as symbols only half veiling events which are on their way. Sudden mutations of fortune are dear to story; and Joseph in a single day steps from the slaves' prison to the prime minister's throne, while it is given to him to be dispenser of food to a starving world.

But when in the exercise of his office Joseph sees his own brethren stand before him, recognised but not recognising, then we get one of those double situations which are so fertile a source of beauty in story. And the situation is developed to the utmost. Joseph is torn opposite ways, by desire for righteous vengeance, and by reviving affection for kindred seen in the land of strangers. Now Joseph plays the foreigner with his brethren, speaking to them through an interpreter, while he can hear their naïve conversation; now he entangles them in cross-examination as to their home affairs; now they find themselves overwhelmed with hospitality, mysteriously arranged at table in the order of their age; again their innocence is caught in strange situations of circumstantial guilt. Nor is this merely play. A moral effect is at work, as the brethren are given an opportunity of rising above themselves: from the first they have been led to think of their brother whose distress of soul they would not hear when he besought them; they are as tender to their father in the temporary loss of Benjamin as they were cruel in depriving him forever of his loved Joseph; they had once united to slay or sell one brother, now two of their number offer, the one his liberty, the other his own children, to secure Benjamin for their father's old age. At last the tangle resolves as Joseph sobs out that he is the lost brother; and plot rises into providence with the reassuring truth that not his brethren but God was the disposer of events, who permitted the slavery of one to save a world from famine. The excitement settles down into happy idyl pictures of the migration from Canaan to Egypt: the old father fainting at the news of Joseph's life, restored by the sight of real wagons sent to convey the family goods. The sons become chief herdsmen for the Egyptians. The father is presented at the court of Pharaoh, and the majesty of the crown bows down before the simpler majesty of patriarchal white hairs.

The reader continues his perusal of *Genesis;* but the curtain has dropped. It is now the intellectual faculties to which appeal is made, with economic changes affecting the land tenure of Egypt, a few verses raising reflections as to consequences that would extend over centuries. The difference thus felt between the narrative of Joseph and what precedes and follows is just the difference between story and history. In other literatures story is quite a separate branch of literature, with matter of its own, and the verse style usually known as epic. In the literature of the Bible the stories are portions of the national history, attracted to the prose of historic narrative. The connection between the two is even closer still: story is used as a means of historic emphasis; and the elaborate narrative of Joseph is justified by the position of the man who is the link between Israel and Egypt.

It may be added that, besides this distinction of history and story, a properly printed Bible should keep separate to the reader's eye the history itself and the statistical or legal documents by which it is supported: just as in modern literature a volume of Hallam or Macaulay will print in separate type the text and the footnotes or appendices. When all proper distinctions have been observed, then the reader is in a position to appreciate the narrative literature of Scripture: the continuous thread of *history* maintained through half the Bible, supported from time to time for those who desire it by *documentary* supplement, but with the spirit of the history made impressive for all with a wealth of epic *stories*.

Scripture Narrative considered as History and as Literature

The narrative portions of Scripture will hold a very different position in the study of history and in the study of literature. The first object of the historian is to ascertain the exact facts of the past. To him the historical books of the Bible are materials upon which he is to work. He will sift his materials: inquiring as to authorship, age, mode of composition; discriminating different degrees of authority in different parts, according as they are the work of contemporary or other writers. With all this he will combine material drawn from other sources: modern discovery, or documentary matter outside the Bible. In the nature of things his results must be ever under revision, as more and more of material is given him to combine. But to the student of literature the historical books of the Bible, precisely as they stand, remain a literary product of permanent significance; for they are nothing less than the History of the People of Israel as Presented by Themselves.

The distinction for which I am contending can be illustrated in other fields. Shakespeare has given us plays which touch the history of England. In regard to these plays just the same questions arise as in regard to books of Scripture. One critic ascribes the plays to Shakespeare, others to another author, or to several authors in collaboration. One critic accepts the plays as history; another thinks that Shakespeare, careless as to exact details of events, has used history as a form in which to embody general conceptions of life. It is obvious that a number of critics, holding irreconcilable opinions on these points, might sit side by side in a theatre, and find themselves affected in exactly the same way by the play as presented on the stage; it would never occur to them to interrupt the performance in order to settle whether a detail of the dramatic action was or was not in accordance with the latest historic opinion. There would be no need to discuss whether the historic study or the literary effect were the more important; it is enough that the two are distinct.

But perhaps an objection may be raised to this analogy. In regard to the historic books of the Bible where, it may be asked, is the Shakespeare? The answer is that in this case we have, not the transcendent genius of an individual poet, but the national consciousness of a great people. For whatever may be the truth as to the process by which books of Scripture assumed the form in which we have them, it is not questioned that they represent the history as it presented itself to the mind of the nation itself. The narrative of Scripture is philosophic history, of permanent importance in the world's literature.

The national consciousness of Israel recognises the race as a chosen people, with a mission to be the witness of its invisible God to the nations of the earth. The first portion of the history, the biblical *Genesis*, gives us what that word implies — the Gradual Formation of the Chosen Nation. The next section is The Exodus (the biblical *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*), the Emigration of the Chosen People to the Land of Promise; with migration goes the gradual evolution into an organised nation, and the massing at this point of legal documents makes the Constitutional History of Israel. Under the name of The Judges (the biblical *Joshua*, *Judges*, part of *Samuel*) we next distinguish the Grand Transition: a people starting with theocracy, the government of an invisible God, comes to accept the rule of visible kings copied from the nations around. But precisely at the time these kings begin there is established a regular order of 'prophets,' or interpreters for God, representing the old idea of theocracy: the fourth period of the history may be named as The Kings and The Prophets, a regular Government of Kings tempered by an Opposition of Prophets. Then comes The Exile: the witnessing of Israel for Jehovah has to be carried on in the land of strangers. There return from exile, not the whole people, but only those who are devoted to the service of God; not the Hebrew Nation, but the Jewish Church: and the final section is thus the Ecclesiastical History of *The Chronicles*. The spirit of the history is throughout made emphatic by story, or at times by fable or song. But in addition to the formal historic books we have to note two others. *Deuteronomy* gives us the Orations and Songs of Moses, emphasising the crisis of the leader's Farewell to Israel. And in *Isaiah* we find a certain dramatic work which, in connection with the deliverance from exile, reads a meaning into events such as strikes a unity through the whole career of the chosen people: it is an Epilogue to the History of Israel.

What has been said as to the narrative of the Old Testament may, with the proper modifications, be laid down in regard to certain parts of the New Testament. Accordingly, the two chapters that follow will deal with The History of the People of Israel as Presented by Themselves, and again, with The History of the New Testament Church as Presented by Itself.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AS PRESENTED BY THEMSELVES

Prologue to the Old Testament

THE relation between the people of Israel and their God is in the Bible expressed by the word 'covenant': God appears repeatedly as referring to his covenant with Abraham, and at successive stages in the history of Israel the covenant is renewed. The word 'testament,' which in later times has changed its meaning, was in earlier English exactly equivalent to 'covenant': hence it is natural that the sacred literature of Israel should be called 'The Old Testament,' or covenant between God and his ancient people of Israel.

It might have been expected that this literature should commence with the first of the fathers: as a fact, *Genesis* commences long before. But when the eleven chapters which precede Abraham are examined, the reason is plain. The call of Abraham is not the first example of covenantal relations between God and mankind.

When the origin of all things has been noted in the creation of the world, Adam is granted dominion over all the earth; the garden of Eden is given him for his abode, and for a sign of obedience is the command to abstain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the covenant between God and the common ancestor of men. Then is narrated the eating of the forbidden fruit; and Adam is driven out of Eden. With the slaying of Abel by Cain, the feud of the righteous and the wicked has appeared upon earth. Its continuance is suggested in the two genealogies that follow. The one traces the progeny of Cain to Lamech, the inventor of deadly weapons. In the other, Abel is replaced by Seth: "then began men to call upon the name of the LORD." Descendants of Seth — including Enoch, who "walked with God, and he was not, for God took him" — are traced to Noah. At that point corruption has reached its completeness; and then, with vivid detail, is pictured the flood which sweeps a world away, the household of Noah alone preserved in the floating ark.

With Noah we have a fresh starting point for mankind, and a fresh covenant:

> The bow shall be in the cloud: and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

The foulness of Canaan's father recommences the history of sin, and the Curse of Noah prophesies the feud of righteous and wicked nations.

> Cursed be Canaan;
>   A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.
> Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem;
>   And let Canaan be his servant.
> God enlarge Japheth,
> And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
>   And let Canaan be his servant.

A genealogical table connects the sons of Noah with the nations of the world that were to be; this is followed by the story of the Tower of Babel, in which diversity of speech enhances differences of nationality. Another table traces the individual descendants of Noah to Abraham.

Enough has been said to show how the early chapters of *Genesis* serve as prologue to the Old Testament. Twice has God entered into covenant with all mankind, as represented in a common ancestor; twice the covenant has been broken, and sin has triumphed. Henceforward a particular people is to be called forth from among the nations, and through this chosen people all the nations of the earth are to be blessed.

Genesis: or, The Formation of the Chosen Nation

The first division of the history of Israel is occupied with the origin of the chosen nation. Abraham is called upon to give up his country and kindred, and to go out into a new land that is promised to his seed. The descendants of Abraham are followed through the stage in which they are a nomad people, wandering from station to station in the Canaan that is hereafter to be their own; when they are a succession of families, living under simple patriarchal rule; until at last they have grown into the twelve tribes which never ceased to be the basis of the future nation's organisation.

The main note in the history is the gradual narrowing of the succession to the covenant. It was a family migration which had started from Mesopotamia: Abraham and his kinsman Lot, with their households. When the land is no longer able to bear the increased flocks and herds, Lot makes his choice for the fertile plains with their cities of wickedness, Abraham remains in the country districts of Canaan. Lot is entangled in the wars of the cities and taken prisoner; Abraham comes to his deliverance. As the doom of the vile cities is approaching Abraham is admitted into the counsels of Deity; in his intercessory prayer for the fifty, the forty and five, the forty, the thirty, the twenty, the ten righteous men who may be found in Sodom, we find the first example of piety struggling with the mysteries of providential judgments. At last we have the exciting story of the destruction of the guilty cities: vice seeking to lay hands on the very angels themselves; Lot and his household torn away by force before it is too late; Lot's wife looking back and overtaken by the destruction; Lot himself, with the spectacle of desolation before him, clinging to the chance of city life at the point where destruction may stop.[1] Thus one of the original emigrants is unfaithful to the career of the chosen people. And, by incestuous wedlock, Lot becomes ancestor of the Moabites and Ammonites, chief neighbours and foes of the future Israel.

There is a narrowing of the succession even among the descendants of Abraham. The long childlessness of Sarah brings into prominence the children of the bondwoman. There is a glimpse of household strife, persecuting mistress and mocking maid; we have the affecting story of Hagar in the wilderness going a bowshot away that she may not see her child die, and coming upon the well; Abraham is heard crying to God that Ishmael might live before him. But the children of the bondwoman are not to inherit with the children of the free. Ishmael stops short at the nomad type of life, ancestor of Bedouin Arabs; his lot is compared to the wild ass,[2] untameable, rejoicing in desert solitudes; his hand is against every man's and every man's against his, but he has no place in the advance of history.

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[1] *Genesis* xix. 20.

[2] *Genesis* xvi. 12.

The long-promised seed appears when to Abraham and Sarah in their extreme old age Isaac is born, a son of promise, rather than a child according to the flesh. Immediately we have the strange incident of the offering of Isaac. Abraham obeys without question, and passes straight to the appointed spot, while the child wonders innocently at the absence of a lamb for sacrifice; with wordless submission he is bound on the altar. The lifted knife is stayed, but the symbolic act has reached its completion: in their ancestor Isaac the future people of Israel have been solemnly devoted to their mission.

In the second generation there is a further falling out of the succession. Two children struggle in the womb of Rebekah: before they are born the oracular word declares that the elder shall serve the younger. The natural course of events is found to fulfil the prediction. From the first Esau is attracted to the hunter's ideal. Rough in person he is also rough in life; he is full of impulses, generous or revengeful, but without the tenacity of purpose that makes great nations. In a fit of appetite he sells his birthright to his younger brother for a mess of pottage. He takes a wife from the daughters of the land, and is thereby a grief to Isaac and Rebekah. At last we have the strange story of the stolen blessing. Diversities of the children have led to favouritism on the part of the parents: Isaac, on the verge of death, seeks to use his patriarchal authority to secure the succession for his favourite, Esau, to be proclaimed at a feast of the venison his soul loveth; the mother takes advantage of

Isaac's blindness, and by a trick secures the blessing for her pet, Jacob. The father trembles when he discovers the fraud, and Esau piteously wails, "Hast thou but one blessing?" But the prophetic word cannot be recalled, and Isaac has unconsciously ratified the surrender which Esau himself had made. Jacob is the lord; for Esau nothing can be promised but the occasional rebellion: a foreshadowing of Edom, near and bitter neighbours to Israel, granted at times to work havoc, but forever outside the career of sustained progress.

Other stories illustrate the providential care that preserves the pure descent of the coming race. Twice Abraham in his timidity disavows his wife, and twice miracle preserves Sarah from the princes of the land. It is the desire to find a wife for Isaac out of the original kin of Abraham, which gives us the beautiful idyl of the wooing of Rebekah: the faithful steward and his long journey to Mesopotamia; the prayer by the well; the maiden Rebekah unconsciously using the very words that are to be the sign of the Lord's choice; the profuse hospitality of Bethuel; the steward's refusal to eat until his errand has been done; the simple answer, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord, we cannot speak unto thee bad or good;" the family longing to delay separation and the maiden deciding for the immediate journey; Isaac receiving his new wife as he is meditating in the fields at eventide. Rebekah in her turn uses this same necessity of a wife from the homeland as an excuse for getting Jacob away from Esau's wrath. But in this case instead of idyl we have a prolonged story of adventure. The hospitable reception of Jacob by Laban is diversified with plenty of trickery on both sides: in full detail we are able to watch the building up of a fortune and the formation of a large family. Jacob's first night of solitude after he had left home, with its dream and vow of Bethel, seems to open up to him for the first time a spiritual world outside the course of everyday life. And on his return journey we have the mystic story of struggle with supernatural power, winning Jacob the new name 'Israel,' from which the chosen people is to be called. The story works up to a breathless climax in the meeting with Esau, and the whole future of the nation to come trembles in the balance: but a wave of generous impulse sweeps suddenly over the warrior huntsman, and Israel is saved.

Other stories, or brief historic notices, explain names of places in the promised land, or touch upon peoples who are to be neighbours to the future Israel. The most important of these stories is the Burial of Sarah. In substance, the incident is no more than the purchase of a piece of land; but it is told with all the conventionalities and elaborate courtesies with which the stately life of the East clothes even a commonplace transaction.

> And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. And Abraham rose up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying: If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for the full price let him give it to me in the midst of you for a possession of a buryingplace. Now Ephron was sitting in the

> midst of the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt, I pray thee, hear me: I will give the price of the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

But there is more in this story than may appear at first sight. For a people in the nomadic stage there can be no point of territorial fixity except the sepulchres of their dead. Thus in the incident of Abraham buying the cave of Machpelah we have the chosen nation taking formal possession of the promised land.

The climax of *Genesis* is found in the story of Joseph, which with its elaborate literary beauties has already been fully treated. The chosen people pass into Egypt, and there continue their silent growth. And the blessing pronounced from the deathbed of Jacob stamps upon the tribes of Israel the varied characteristics which they are to retain to the end of their history.

The Exodus: or, Migration to the Land of Promise

The Exodus is a story of national emigration. But the forty years' passage through the desert appears in the Scripture narrative as also the period in which, through the divine legislation of Moses, Israel gradually attains the national development which in other peoples is called constitutional history. Hence, in this second division of biblical literature, the form is a thin thread of historic narrative running through and binding together the whole constitutional lore of Israel. The light of story is focussed upon no more than two points of the narrative: it appears at the beginning to display the raw material of slaves in Egypt out of which a great people may be made; again, in the witness of Balaam to a completed process and a nation organised for victory.

Bible story is nowhere more vivid than in its picture of the Plagues of Egypt. The curtain rises on the children of Israel as slaves in a land where once they had been received as guests; the Egyptians secretly dread their growing numbers, and seek to break their spirit by hard labour, and to exterminate the male children. But a single babe escapes, to become the deliverer Moses; the Egyptian court unconsciously educates its foe, and he receives his commission an exile in a desert beside the burning bush. The story may be prolix in its earlier part, with reiterated shrinking of Moses, meek and slow of speech, from the bold work assigned him by God. But when Moses and Aaron have confronted Pharaoh, the march of events makes a moving panorama of miracle. Pharaoh is the incarnation of sullen force, yielding by inches, or for a single moment, only to harden his heart when the crisis is past. But it is human strength matching itself against the inexhaustible resources of nature, which Moses is permitted to wield. The river which is Egypt's pride runs with blood; from out its reed-grass frogs invade the secret recesses of luxury; the dust of the ground takes life to become loathsome vermin; indoors and outside there is no escape from swarming flies and corruption. While all over the land of Egypt beasts are dying of murrain, in Israel's land of Goshen the cattle are intact. The royal magicians, seeking to compete with the wonders of Moses, become themselves victims to the plague of boils. Now the heavens begin to play their part, and rain down wasting hail, while, to enhance the wonder, fire winds about the hailstones and melts them not. The land of Egypt is one mass of desolation: but from outside the east wind blows steadily until the swarming locusts hide the ground; at a sign from the champion of Israel the western hurricane succeeds, and the locust hosts are swept into the Red Sea. Then the whole scene dissolves into darkness that might be felt: every man a solitary prisoner where he stands. At last, midnight reveals the slain firstborn, and Pharaoh and his people thrust Israel forth, bribing them with jewels to be gone without delay. Even then the struggle is not over: Pharaoh pursues, and comes upon the fugitive people entangled between the land of their foe and the seacoast. Now appears the climax toward which events have been trending. The mass of cloud which hides the people from their pursuers becomes luminous to the Israelites, and points a way opened through the midst of the sea itself; the chosen people pass forward on dry ground, with the waters towering above them on either hand. The veil of cloud lifting, the Egyptian hosts follow on the strange path; but the moistening sand makes their wheels heavy, and the returning waters whelm them in the depths. On the other side rises the shout of freedom: women with timbrels and dances reiterate the one thought of deliverance, while in the pauses of the dance the men sing the marvels by which the deliverance has come about.

> The floods stood upright as an heap;
> The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.
> The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake,
> I will divide the spoil . . .
> Thou didst blow with thy wind; the sea covered them:
> They sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Historic narrative follows to trace the earlier journeyings of Israel. The general spirit is a looking-back to the fleshly ease of Egypt; particular incidents bring out the miraculous provision of water in the desert, the feeding with bread from heaven. Contact with Amalek gives Israel its first war; a meeting with Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, leads to the first step in organisation — the creation of subordinate officials to relieve the supreme lawgiver. Three months' journeying leads to the long halt in the desert of Sinai.

At this point the other side of The Exodus becomes prominent, by which it is to be the constitutional history of the people of Israel. We find, in succession, four Covenants[1] between God and his chosen people; that is to say, the perpetual covenant relation between God and Israel embodies itself successively in four systems of legislative enactment. Each 'Book of the Covenant' presents the circumstances under which it is promulgated, the code of laws itself, and, at the close, some verbal or ceremonial sanction for the law. First, there is the Law of the Ten Commandments: here, amid thunder and mystic darkness, the voice of God is heard by the people. A Book of the Covenant immediately follows, of which Moses is the mediator. Whereas the decalogue had only given basic principles of a moral system, this fuller covenant contains a complete code of criminal law; with economic enactments, such as the regulation of slavery, or prohibition of usury, or establishment of sabbatic rest for the land; it contains also enactments as to worship, and establishes the three annual feasts. Besides the promises and threats which make the conclusion, there is a ceremonial sanction with sacrifice, and the people are sprinkled with "the blood of the covenant." Again, when Israel, in the absence of Moses, has worshipped the golden calf, we have the Covenant of the Second Table. Moses first works vengeance on the idolaters by the hands of the zealous Levites; then turns back to intercede passionately that the Lord shall not blot out his people. Accordingly, where before only an angel had been promised as leader to Israel, Jehovah is now brought to declare that his very presence shall go with his people, and be the sanction of the new covenant. It is only necessary in this case to recapitulate leading enactments: and Moses thus bears a second table to the people, his face supernaturally radiant with the glory into which he has been admitted. There remains yet one more — the Covenant of Holiness. Modern associations with this word must not make us forget that here we are dealing with national, not personal, religion. The holiness is here the separateness of God's peculiar people: separation from the sins or evil customs of surrounding people; separation by national signs, such as the sabbath and the jubile;

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[1] For references see 'The Exodus' in the Appendix.

separateness in laws or legal customs; holiness, finally, as opposed to uncleanness in the offerings to the Lord. A long-sustained denunciation of thrilling curses upon disobedience brings this fourth covenant to a close.

When the march is resumed from Sinai — now with pomp of ark and tabernacle and ordered procession of the tribes — we find successive sections of the history relating little but outbreaks of the spirit of murmuring, which reaches its climax in the incident of the spies. This is the turning-point of The Exodus. At the very threshold of the promised land the report of the spies makes the heart of the people to fail with the thought of the giants and cities fenced up to heaven. Divine wrath dooms the murmuring generation to wander in the wilderness, while only the children, who have never known the enervating life of Egypt, shall go over to take possession of the land of Canaan. For thirty-eight more years the wilderness life is prolonged; the older generation dying out, the youth gaining hardihood from desert life. Little is told of the eight-and-thirty years, and that little belongs to the close. Only a later section displays Moses as himself involved in the doom of the people he has ruled; his successor, Joshua, is to lead the nation over Jordan.

The whole forty years of The Exodus find their most important history, not in incidents of the journey, but in the constitutional documents which fill up this part of Scripture. The documents[1] fall into two classes. One class is purely statistical. We have a census of the children of Israel who came into Egypt; another of the tribes on the march; another of those who died in the plague of Moab; another of the oblations at the dedication of the tabernacle. A detailed specification is given of the tabernacle and its service; again, in almost the same words, a specification of the carrying out of the same. A calendar of sacred feasts is naturally found. And there are geographical statistics: an itinerary of wilderness journeys; allotments of lands to the tribes; allotments of cities for Levites; and, especially, of the cities of refuge, by aid of which voluntary exile was to discriminate between murder and homicide. Perhaps the most obvious literary impression left upon our minds by reading such documents is the immense difference made by the most elementary machinery of modern figures. One important census[1] in The Exodus would, in a modern book, be fully conveyed by this brief form: —

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[1] For references see 'The Exodus' in the Appendix.

Generations, by families, by fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: Of the tribe of

Reuben	46,500
Simeon	59,300
Gad	45,650
Judah	74,600
Issachar	54,400
Zebulun	57,400
Joseph [Ephraim]	40,500
Joseph [Manasseh]	32,200
Benjamin	35,400
Dan	62,700
Asher	41,500
Naphtali	53,400
Total	603,550

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[1] *Numbers* i. 20–44.

In the Bible this has to be expressed with full verbiage: —

> Of the children of Simeon, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, those that were numbered thereof, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.
>
> Of the children of Gad, their generations, by their families, etc.

and so on, in twelve paragraphs, identical save for the alteration of the numbers.

Again, we have a long array of Laws and Ordinances. The deliverance from Egypt gives us the Ordinances of the Passover and of the Firstborn. The incident of Nadab and Abihu connects itself with the Law of the Consecration of Priests; the more serious outbreak of Korah and his crew leads to a consolidation of the whole law in respect to priests and Levites. Our modern case-made law is exactly paralleled in the Judgment of the Sabbath-breaker; in the Law of the Inheritance of Daughters, and its sequel, On the Marriage of Heiresses; in the Law of Spoils: in each instance a general principle is brought into consideration by a particular case that raises it. The Law of Oblations has constitutional importance as providing for the support of the priesthood. The Law of Purification and Atonement is in reality a system of diet and regimen; that of Vows and Tithes a settlement of voluntary and regular taxation; the Ritual of the Heifer of Purification treats of ceremonial cleanness, or, in other words, makes cleanliness a matter of religion. There is even a Law of Fringes, regulating the item of dress that was to be a perpetual reminder to the Israelites not "to go about after their own heart and their own eyes," but to remember the commandments of the Lord.

At its close, the history of The Exodus strikes the period covered by the lost book, *The Wars of Jehovah*, and snatches of heroic ballad light up bare narrative, painting a total discomfiture of Moab, or recalling the folk-song of the well: —

Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it;
The well, which the princes digged,
Which the nobles of the people delved,
With the sceptre, and with their staves.

Israel is facing the last peoples that stand between them and the land of promise. Their kindred of Edom they respect; but Sihon of the Amorites and Og of Bashan are utterly exterminated, and their land settled by Israel's more pastoral tribes. It is here that we reach the second of the two epic stories of The Exodus: the Plagues of Egypt had presented Israel in their abasement, the Witness of Balaam enables us to see the same people as a unique nation, a terror to all around.

Moab is one of the peoples that are trembling before the advance of Israel, and the Moabite king, Balak, sends to a distant land for Balaam to come and curse the foe. This Balaam is a sincere worshipper of Jehovah; he is a man endowed with the spirit of prophecy, and in his prophetic ecstasy has a supernatural insight which to the heathen around him seems enchantment. But when not in these moments of exaltation he is an ordinary, worldly man, adapting himself to those around him and seeking his own material interests: he is a supreme example of an attempt to serve God and Mammon. On two occasions he goes as far as he can to meet the views of the Moabite king, and orders the preliminary sacrifices. But in each case, as he seeks solitude for the prophetic exaltation, the spiritual side of Balaam prevails, and curse becomes blessing: by a rare literary effect the prose of the story becomes verse to clothe the outpouring of prophecy: —

For from the top of the rocks I see him,
  And from the hills I behold him;
Lo, it is a people that dwell alone,
  And shall not be reckoned among the nations.

Balak in desperation chooses a third point of view, and Balaam listlessly attends him. Without seeking solitude this time, the prophet simply turns where he stands to gaze on Israel in the desert below. His eye is caught by the serried ranks of tents, the orderly array to which Israel has been disciplined, so different from the rude encampments of desert hordes: in a new outburst he compares this to spreading valleys, gardens by the river side, avenues of aloes of Jehovah's planting; and he yet again exalts the people's lion-like might. When Balak storms, Balaam pours forth prophecies more distinct, and tells of Moab, Seir, Edom, Amalek, all overthrown by the sceptre that shall rise out of Israel. Thus Balaam in his mood of inspiration has been compelled to witness to the finished work of The Exodus. But when story gives place to history we are able to see, not by direct statement, but by inference, how in some uninspired hour Balaam descended to the office of tempter, and suggested the seductive influences of

Moab's daughters,[1] which drew Israel into lust, and the following plague, and, finally, to war. From the list of the slain[2] we find that Balaam the man died fighting against the people whom Balaam the prophet had blessed.

Deuteronomy: or, The Farewell of Moses to Israel

At the point we have now reached the succession of historic books is interrupted by a book which is not history, but oratory. A full title for *Deuteronomy* might be, The Orations and Songs of Moses, constituting his Farewell to the People of Israel. As oratory it is unsurpassed, in its rush of rhythmic sentences, its ebb and flow of exalted passion, its accents of appeal and denunciation. The matter is as striking as the form. *Deuteronomy* has been called the most spiritual book in the Old Testament; its sudden discovery worked a religious revolution, and from the days of Josiah to the days of Jesus it was a text-book of Jewish devoutness. But the spiritually minded Moses has to encounter a people moved mainly by material promises and threats: through the entire book the two tides of feeling are in conflict. And beneath the whole lies a situation unique in its human pathos: all who listen will enter the land of promise, he who speaks is the only one excluded. Thus, through the succession of orations a dramatic situation is being developed; at length — with the elasticity that distinguishes Hebrew literature — oratory gives place to song, and a climax is reached in which pathos is only an undertone in glorious triumph.

The very title page of the book lays stress upon the scene, some spot in the deep Arabah, where we can conceive of a vast multitude being brought picturesquely within the sight and hearing of a single speaker. In the first of the four orations Moses announces his Deposition from the Leadership of Israel. In the calm tone of historic survey is traced a succession of events, ending with that outburst of murmuring which drove Israel from the border of the promised land to eight-and-thirty years of wilderness wandering. The tone of the new generation, and the glorious conquests accorded them, had raised again the personal hopes of Moses; he had besought the Lord that he might see the good land beyond Jordan; he had received the final word, "Speak no more to me of this matter." Thus his work is done as mediator through whom the commandments of God are made known to Israel: the commandments remain for Israel to obey, and this obedience shall be their wisdom among the nations. A peroration presents Israel, by their history and their legislation, gloriously separate among the peoples of the world.

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[1] *Numbers* xxxi. 16.

[2] *Numbers* xxxi. 8.

The second oration belongs to a ceremonial occasion: The Delivery of the Covenant to the Levites and Elders. The commandments of which Moses has been the speaker have now been put in written form; this 'Book of the Covenant' — which, in fifteen chapters, follows the second oration — we must suppose handed to the Levites and elders grouped around Moses, and in their custody it is henceforward to remain. In the oration itself Moses appeals to his hearers to write these commandments upon their heart, talking of them when they sit in their house and when they walk by the way, when they lie down and when they rise up. The speech surveys the forty years of providential mercies in the wilderness, and also the succession of murmurings and rebellions. Not for their own righteousness will the people of Israel conquer the nations; only as reward for their own obedience will the land of promise enjoy the rain of heaven, and send forth its corn and wine and oil.

In place of a peroration we find reference to a still more imposing function that is to follow. An ordinance makes provision for the Ceremonial of the Blessing and the Curse, as an institution for the other side of Jordan. But there is a rehearsal[1] of this ceremonial in the presence of Moses: priests standing round the ark in the valley chaunt the curses, and the whole multitude on the slopes shout their Amen. Being only a rehearsal, Moses interrupts this before it is concluded; and himself, in what constitutes the third oration, goes over the matter of blessing and curse. Nowhere in literature is there to be found so sustained an effort of terror-striking speech. Curses are to descend upon the guilty in city and field, when they come in or go out, in basket or kneading trough, in war or peace, in every element of life; curses from the heaven above or the earth under foot; curses on fruit of body, of cattle, of land; curses in the form of madness, or loathly sickness, of defeat and every form of adversity and helplessness. Instead of joyous service of Jehovah amid abundance of all things, they shall serve a bitter enemy in hunger and thirst and lack of all things; horrors of war and siege are painted, with delicate women devouring their own children. The guilty shall be scattered as an abomination through the idol-worshipping nations.

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[1] Chapter xxvii seems to combine an ordinance for the Ceremonial of the Blessing and the Curse on the other side of Jordan with a partial rehearsal on the spot, this latter interrupted by the Third Oration, Chapter xxviii.

> And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I said unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall sell yourselves unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen: and no man shall buy you.

In the fourth oration we mark a transition from national to personal religion: if a man is cherishing evil in his secret heart, and thinking to escape in the general righteousness, he shall be separated from all Israel for the curse to descend upon him. Yet even when the curse has come down, from the most distant land of exile there is a way of escape by turning to God with full purpose of heart. Nor is this difficult: the word is not afar off, but in the very hearts of Israel. Moses calls heaven and earth to witness that he has set before his people life and death: "choose life, that thou mayest live." With a single reference to his extreme age and waning strength, Moses, with words of cheer on his lips, withdraws from the people he has led, and installs Joshua in his place.

A wave of poetic impulse comes over the retired leader, anxious for his people when he is gone.

My doctrine shall drop as the rain,
  My speech shall distil as the dew;
As the small rain upon the tender grass,
  And as the showers upon the herb.

This Song of Moses celebrates Jehovah as the Rock of Israel, Jeshurun as the people of his inheritance, kept as the apple of his eye. When Jeshurun, fed with all the richness of nature, waxes fat and kicks, all nature is aflame with vengeance. Bitter suffering shows the difference between the Rock of Israel and the loathly gods to whom Israel has revolted; commiseration changes in the heart of Deity to vengeance, and Jehovah again fights on behalf of his own people.

We have reached the last stage of the action, and the Passing of Moses. The whole people wait to see their leader depart on his mystic journey: heads of the tribes line the route. Moses, with lingering steps, passes along, speaking to each leader words that thrill: old war cries of the tribes, or prophetic picturings, to be treasured up as blessings for the future. Reuben, strong in numbers; Judah, sufficient of his hands. Levi has been proved at the water of strife. On the shoulders of Benjamin Jehovah shall have his dwelling. Joseph is dowered with all gifts of sky and deep, of ancient mountains and everlasting hills. Zebulun the wanderer, Issachar with his tent life, Gad the lioness, Dan the lion's whelp, Naphtali rejoicing in his western sea and sunny south, Asher in wealth of oil and brass: each has received his word of farewell. For a last time Moses takes in at a single view the vast multitude, and lifts his hands in the final blessing: —

There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun,
  Who rideth upon the heaven for thy help,
  And in his excellency on the skies.
The eternal God is thy dwelling place,
  And underneath are the everlasting arms.

Then Moses turns to resume the journey on which none may accompany him. Like the hush that follows a passionate climax comes a drop to the barest prose, telling of the ascent, the gaze from Pisgah's top over the promised land, the solitary death, the sepulchre that no man knoweth. The mighty personality which has linked the bondmen of Egypt to the conquerors of the land of promise has passed out of the history of Israel.

The Judges: or, Transition to a Secular Monarchy

Heroes of the Transition: this might be a title for the portion of sacred history which is contained in the biblical *Joshua*, *Judges*, and part of *Samuel*. Hitherto Israel has had the distinction among the nations of a theocracy, the government of an invisible God, whose will is made known through his representative, Moses. In the future they will be found living under ordinary kings, who succeed by natural descent. In the intervening period we find, at intervals, and for portions of the nation, rulers of a special kind, who are called in the Bible 'judges.' But the associations of this English word are altogether misleading. The judges of Israel are nearer to the 'heroes' of other peoples; and, like the heroes of chivalry, their glory is redressing human wrongs by the sword. They are, however, distinctly commissioned by God: as we find prophets and 'angels' in this history interpreting God's will, so the judge does God's work. Thus, the spirit of the history is here given in the heroic stories. But the stories are fitted into a framework of narrative, under which we can trace a gradual change of spirit, leading the people of Israel to assimilate themselves to the nations around with a secular kingship.

To Joshua the term 'judge' is hardly applicable: he is the successor of Moses, and carries the exodus to its natural conclusion in a conquest of Canaan. Yet here also the spirit of the period is conveyed in heroic story. Like the spies who brought the grapes of Eshcol to the wilderness, we have the exciting adventures of the spies sent to Jericho, received in the house over the wall, and let down by Rahab with the scarlet rope which was to save her in the destruction of the city. The miraculous crossing of the Jordan recalls the crossing of the Red Sea. The first city is conquered by no human force: a mystic captain of the Lord's host takes command, and the city walls fall before a shout. The war against Ai reminds us that we are in a remote age in which the feigned retreat and ambush are military novelties: but here — as so often under Moses the aim of the people interfered with the intentions of providence — the covetousness of Achan brings defeat, until it is purged by his stoning in the Valley of Trouble. Story interest is now varied: in place of war we have the wily embassy of the Gibeonites, who with their old shoes and clouted and musty bread deceive Israel into making an alliance with them as a distant people. This alliance brings against Joshua the League of the Five Kings. In the Battle of Beth-horon, that overthrows these kings, the very heavens are on the side of Israel: the historic narrative speaks of hailstones destroying more than the swords of the people, while the ballad that is quoted makes mention of greater wonders: —

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
  And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon!
And the sun stood still,
And the moon stayed,
  Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies.

After these stories we have only brief summaries of conquests in other parts of Canaan; an elaborate state-paper fixes the allotments of land among the tribes. Then, recalling the Farewell of Moses, we have the solemn scene in which Joshua renews the covenant between God and his people, and writes their vow in the book of the law of God.

It is where the biblical title changes to *The Book of Judges* that the general character of the transition period becomes apparent. The Israelites have committed the fatal error of not entirely driving out the nations of the land: those nations that are left become so many "thorns in their sides."[1] The gods of these nations seduce Israel to idolatry, and the wrath of Jehovah falls upon them. It is to meet situations like this that judges are raised up.

> And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for it repented the LORD because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them.[2]

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[1] *Judges* ii. 3.

[2] *Judges* ii. 18–19.

The history follows the succession of these heroic saviours. Sometimes no more is given than the source of the oppression and the name of the judge. Or some single detail is added: the ox-goad of Shamgar,[1] Abdon[2] with his forty sons and thirty grandsons riding on their seventy ass colts. Or again, with all the vividness of an eye-witness, is related the assassination of the Moabite oppressor, and how Ehud was able to bury his sword in the body of "a very fat man."

Of the greater crises the first is the "mighty oppression" of Jabin and Sisera, when "the highways were unoccupied and the travellers walked through byways." The tyrants had nine hundred chariots of iron: against a force like this the half-armed infantry of Israel would be helpless, except by surprise. This seems to have been the plan of Barak, when, roused by a prophetess, Deborah, he leads the muster of Zebulun and Naphtali to the high ground of Kedesh, from which they can choose a moment for a sudden attack. But treachery is at work. The Kenites had united with Israel during the wilderness journeys, retaining in Canaan their tent life. Heber the Kenite, however, is described as moving his tent away from his brethren until he is in touch with Kedesh; he is at peace with King Jabin: in fact, holds the peaceful relation of a spy. Accordingly the surprise is frustrated, and the army of Sisera fills the plain of Esdraelon. But "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera"; a sudden shower had converted the whole plain into a morass, and while the horses are madly prancing in the mud the Israelites are able to exterminate the enemy in a single day. Sisera fleeing from the battle seeks the friendly tent of Heber. But Heber's wife, Jael, had had no sympathy with her husband's baseness; she now sees her opportunity: with feigned hospitality luring Sisera to rest she drives the nail through his temples while he sleeps. The strange providence by which the treason of the husband was balanced by the treachery of the wife, this, as much as the victory itself, inspires the exultation of Deborah's Song.

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[1] iii. 31. [2] xii. 14.

The scene changes to Gilead, and the oppressors are now Bedouin hordes of the desert — Midianites, Amalekites, and children of the east, as locusts for multitude, and their camels as sand that is upon the seashore, with tawdry splendour of earrings and crescents and pendants and chains upon the camels' necks; before their devouring progress all sustenance of crops and flocks vanishes, and the men of Israel take refuge in caves and mountain dens. The spirit of the story is a sort of providential scorn for the vanity of mere numbers. The champion raised up is of a family the poorest in Manasseh, and he least in his father's house. Gideon hears with astonishment the angel's salutation to him as a mighty man of valour; before he can rise to the description he needs sign after sign to reassure him — the angel departing in the flame of sacrifice, the fleece moist when all around is dry, dry when all around is moist. With strenuous exertions Gideon has got an army together. They are pronounced too many: the proclamation for all the fearful and trembling to depart releases two out of every three. The ten thousand that remain are still too many: the chance token of lapping with the hands instead of kneeling down to drink selects a three hundred who are enough as the instrument with which Jehovah's work will be done. As the crisis draws near there is the thrilling night adventure of Gideon and his servant descending into the midst of the sleeping hosts, and hearing one tell a fellow his dream. In the heart of the vast multitude, it appears, there is dread of the sword of Gideon. The hint is caught: Gideon's strategy is the manufacture of a panic. Torches are covered with pitchers: at the word of command the pitchers are shattered, the torches flare out, the trumpet rings, and with the shout "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon" the three hundred charge down the three slopes, and drive the Midianite hosts down the valley in headlong haste, slaughter and rout, until the story slowly dies out in long strain of pursuit and plunder.

Heroism melts into tragic pathos in the story of Jephthah, compelled by a rash vow to offer up in sacrifice the daughter who has come out leading the dance in honour of her father's victory. The opposite spirit underlies the stories of Samson. This Samson has the vast strength and physical robustness that overflows in humour and rough sport. And humour may do the work of providence: the Israelites are cowed before the Philistines, Samson delights to mock the foe and make them contemptible. He turns foxes with firebrands on their tails into the standing corn; he slays a host with no weapon but an ass's jawbone; he loses a wager to Philistine guests, and pays it in raiment of other Philistines he slaughters for the purpose; he lets himself be confined in Gaza, and runs away with the city gates on his back; he pretends he will be helpless if bound with new cords, or if his locks be woven with the web, and at a word the cords snap like thread, and his nod carries away web and pin and all. When, under Delilah's seductions, Samson has revealed the true secret, and been cast blind into prison, his nemesis takes the form of making sport for the triumphant Philistines. But at last he makes sport in grim earnest: with a jest on his lips — of taking vengeance for at least one of his two eyes — he bows the pillars in his mighty strain, and buries with him more foes than he had slain in his life.

The succession of hero stories has been interrupted by a story of a different kind, yet most important for the history of the transition. It is nothing less than the appearance of a 'king' in Israel. After his great deliverance Gideon was offered royalty for himself and his descendants; but he refused, true to the great principle that Jehovah was Israel's king. After his death his baseborn son, Abimelech, persuaded the men of Shechem to crown him: he slew the seventy sons of his father, except one who escaped; and then, with a rabble following, marched on in triumph. At an angle in the road the escaped Jotham confronted the procession, and from a safe height flung down at them this fable, in scorn of kingship: —

> The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them, and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come, thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I leave my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees said unto the vine, Come, thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to wave to and fro over the trees?

> Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come, thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

The final word is fulfilled: an inglorious reign of three years ends in feuds, Abimelech burns the tower of Shechem over the heads of his rebel subjects, and himself meets death at the hands of a woman.

It is the darkest hour of disorder before the dawn of firmer rule which is revealed in the two stories of Micah and of the Benjamite War: four times here is repeated the formula, that there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. There seems to be a naïve simplicity in the evil revealed by the first of these stories: the mother in devout thankfulness that her son has restored the silver he had stolen from her makes it into graven images; Micah himself manages to secure a wandering Levite, and feels sure of the Lord's favour because he has a Levite as priest of his idols; the Danites wandering to a new settlement steal Micah's images, and to the protesting Levite use the convincing argument that it will be better for him to be priest to a tribe than to a single man; finally, when Micah and his neighbours pursue, the Danites let their numbers be seen, and considerately advise Micah not to let his voice be heard, "lest angry fellows should fall upon him." The other is a story of unspeakable outrage, bloody revenge, treacherous betrayal of women. Yet, if this suggests much as to the helplessness of woman in an age of lawlessness, it must be remembered that to about the same period, and to no very distant locality, belongs the exquisite idyl of Ruth — the rustic peace of Bethlehem, the friendship of two women, and generous love of Boaz, which introduced a Moabitess into the ancestry of Israel's kings.

The rise of order out of chaos associates itself with the name of Samuel. Every child knows the stories of Samuel's birth and boyhood: how the mother, long childless, vows her babe to the Lord's service, how she fulfils her vow, and watches over her child from a distance, bringing every year the little robe; how while yet a youth Samuel hears the Divine call he does not understand, and unwillingly bears to the aged Eli the tidings of his doom. "The word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision." "The LORD appeared again in Shiloh . . . and the word of Samuel came to all Israel." This is nothing less than the rise of prophecy: single prophets have at times appeared, but from Samuel there is an unbroken order of prophets to the end of Israel's national existence. And Samuel's first act, when fully established, is to renew once more at Mizpah the covenant between God and Israel. But with the rise of prophecy we have the growing demand for kingship. All through the transition there have been reachings after national unity: in the temporary sway of judges; in the abortive kingship of Abimelech; in the idea that the authority of a judge might be hereditary, frustrated by the wickedness of Eli's sons; in the attempt of Samuel himself to make his sons judges, failing likewise by their unworthiness; Shiloh also, with its ark, seems to be accepted as a symbol of national unity, and hence the importance attached to the circumstance of the ark falling into the hands of the

Philistines, and the stories of the wonders that attend its presence until it is recovered. At last the people insist upon a king to lead them to battle like the nations around; however unwilling, Samuel is commanded to give way: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me." At first it is a kingship under prophetic control: Samuel anoints Saul, and writes in a book the manner of the kingdom. But between the kingship imitated from the nations and the prophetic order inspired directly by God there is irreconcilable antipathy. There is more than a momentary meaning in the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

In realistic detail is described the anointing of Saul. Then more historic narrative follows the early part of the reign, and the success of the kingly office in organising resistance to the Philistines. To this war belongs the story of the Raid on Michmash: Jonathan and his armour-bearer single-handed take a garrison, and themselves barely escape execution in consequence of Saul's rash vow. Even here the hasty sacrifice of Saul produces a breach between prophet and king. The breach becomes final in the Amalekite war, when Agag with the chief of the devoted spoil is spared; Samuel sternly slays Agag, and with the sign of the rent robe pronounces the kingdom rent from Saul. David is anointed: the presence side by side of the future dynasty and the dynasty already rejected affords the materials of a long feud, with which the history of the transition is brought to a conclusion.

The spirit which has been prominent throughout this portion of the history of Israel culminates in the long-drawn story of adventures in the Feud of Saul and

David. Throughout the whole runs like a refrain the verse: —

> Saul has slain his thousands,
> And David his ten thousands.

All else makes a background against which stand out three striking figures: Saul, of the mighty spear, prototype of the men-at-arms and cavalry of the future; Jonathan the archer, patron of Israel's infantry; David, who works his feats with a sling from a distance, prototype of the artillery of the future: Saul, raised to an eminence by a power which has cast him off, seeing his servants and very children drawn away to his rival, falling under the domination of a spirit of evil, knowing his doom, yet a warrior to the last; David, type of the coming age, with winning grace and artistic genius, a hero in the field, yet with power to direct and govern; Jonathan, natural inheritor of his father's feud, yet knit to the man that must supplant him, until he loves him as his own soul, and the names of the two are forever linked in the most sacred of human friendships. It is a story of rapid movement. Now David is in the midst of palace scenes and bursts of royal frenzy; now he is secretly communing with Jonathan in the field; now he is captain of a band of the discontented in the wilderness; now he is a bulwark to flocks and herds of pastoral Israel, and wins the beautiful and prudent wife of the churlish Nabal; now he is fleeing with his followers through caves and woods; twice he has his enemy in his grasp, and twice his reverence for the person of the Lord's Anointed shames Saul into softer feelings; he is found serving the king of Gath against Israel, until memory of his former prowess against them makes the other lords of the Philistines demand his dismissal; again, he has a city of his own to govern and make prosperous, finds it looted in his absence and takes bitter revenge. For Saul the approaching climax is darkened by the visit to the witch of Endor; Samuel appears from the grave in visible form rehearsing the melancholy doom. All the threads of the story unite in the Battle of Gilboa, in which Saul and Jonathan fall, and the messenger of their death pays the penalty of boasting, slain by David as self-confessed slayer of the Lord's Anointed. Then David pours out his grief in his lament over Saul and Jonathan, lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death not divided.

> I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan,
> Very pleasant hast thou been unto me;
> Thy love to me was wonderful,
> Passing the love of women!

With this touching elegy the heroic story of Scripture comes to a close: we pass into a different spirit of history.

The Kings and Prophets

It is hardly necessary to explain that I am not, in these few pages, attempting to write the history of Israel, but simply to treat the national history as part of the national literature; to indicate threads of connection, which may assist in keeping clear the philosophy of Israel's history as it presents itself to the sacred writers. From the point now reached that history becomes more complex, but does not alter its essential character. Three considerations should be borne in mind. Israel has become a monarchy, with principles of natural descent and all the apparatus of secular kingship. But at the same time there never fails an order of prophets, whose divine commission manifests itself in their appeal to the consciences of their hearers: these prophets stand for the ideas of the old theocracy. Again, it must be remembered that the books now under consideration come from the side of this prophetic opposition. In form they follow the reigns of the kings; when there are two kingdoms they endeavour, as far as chronology permits, to keep the reigns of Israel and Judah side by side; yet, in fact, the secular matter is despatched with the utmost brevity, or we are referred to other histories, but where the mission of prophecy is affected we get minute and vivid detail. Accordingly, in the third place, that which has distinguished the literary character of the history all through — the use of story to emphasise history — adapts itself to the new conditions: we get annals of the kings combined with stories of the prophets.

At the outset prophecy may well be in abeyance, for the kingly and prophetic spirit have united in the man after God's own heart. The account of David's reign falls into two very different parts. One deals, in more or less compressed narrative, with national events: the long-continued conflict between the house of Saul and the house of David, under their military champions Abner and Joab; the wars by which David enlarged and consolidated the kingdom; the great feat of arms by which the impregnable Jerusalem was captured from the Jebusites, and solemnly inaugurated as a sacred metropolis; the planning of a grand temple which David himself was never to see; the mysterious sin of numbering the people, and its strange expiation under the prophetic ministry of Gad. Even here the literary character of the history is made evident by the prominence it gives to poetical compositions of the royal psalmist. David idealises in a single magnificent Song of Victory the deliverances of a lifetime.

The waves of death compassed me,
  The floods of ungodliness made me afraid.
The cords of Sheol were round about me:
  The snares of death came upon me.
In my distress I called upon the Lord,
  Yea, I called unto my God:
And he heard my voice out of his temple,
  And my cry came into his ears.

All nature is suddenly convulsed as Jehovah descends to the rescue, amid bowing heavens and shaking earth, shrouded in thickest darkness, while arrows of sharp lightnings prepare the way. And in the rescue of the righteous man the cause of right itself has triumphed: —

With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful,
  With the perfect man thou wilt show thyself perfect,
With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure,
  And with the perverse thou wilt show thyself froward.

Once more, we have David's Last Words, breathing the spirit of rest after an accomplished ideal of the righteous ruler: —

He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
  A morning without clouds;
When the tender grass springeth out of the earth,
  Through the clear shining after rain.

Very different is the other phase of David's reign: the great personal sin of the ruler after God's heart, and its rebuke by Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb. The prophetic word is spoken: The sword shall not depart from thy house. Accordingly it is prophecy, not history, that we are reading, as we follow the expanded narrative of the Feud between David's Children: the banishment of Absalom, and the masterful conduct by which he procures his return and fresh opportunities of mischief; the great revolt; the long-drawn humiliation of the flight from Jerusalem; the coarse triumph and divided counsels of the usurper; the blunt statesmanship with which Joab brings the king back to power, all the while that David himself is prostrated by his recognition of the Divine hand in all that happens, and his ineradicable tenderness for the fairest as well as most wicked of his sons. Even when David is back at Jerusalem the domestic troubles do not end; in his last moments the feud breaks out afresh in the disputed succession, and Nathan appears for the last time to use the prophetic influence on the side of Solomon.

There is a return to plain history in the brief and compressed narrative in which is presented the political side of the reign of Solomon. The kingdom received from David is extended to what may well be called an empire, and Solomon reigns "over all the kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt." Foreign alliances with Egypt and Tyre bring Israel into the circle of great states. Commercial wealth flows in, and brings splendour of external life; Solomon makes silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars as lowland sycamore trees in abundance. At this one point in the sacred history it would appear as if the place of prophecy were taken by another form of spiritual energy — wisdom. In his prayer at Gibeon Solomon makes wisdom the great desire of his life, and he is exalted to be to the philosophy of Israel what his father had been to its poetry. The gathering literature of proverbs centres around his name, exchange of wisdom takes place between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre, and the Queen of distant Sheba makes a pilgrimage to admire the wisest of kings. It would seem from the tone of the narrative as if the conception of 'wisdom' were here extended to take in the achievement of Solomon in the sacred arts: he erects the magnificent Temple, and in impressive dedicatory prayer makes it the centre of national religion, to which under all circumstances Israel might turn in penitence or supplication. At length, however, Solomon, like his father, yields to feminine influence; his foreign wives corrupt the religion of Israel with heathen rites. At once prophecy comes to the front, and Ahijah throws his influence on the side of the Jeroboam who, amid numerous other adversaries, is the centre of revolt. Solomon himself dies in peace; but when his son Rehoboam, with the reverse of his father's wisdom, takes the counsel of the younger men, and will make his little finger thicker than his father's loins, the cry is heard, "To your tents, O Israel." Jeroboam, backed by the influence of the prophets, rends ten tribes from the house of David.

The history which our literature is to present is increasing in its complexity: henceforward two distinct kingdoms are to be balanced side by side in the sacred narrative. By an incident that shortly follows, the complexity becomes greater still. The first act of Jeroboam is to set up golden calves to represent the gods of Israel, and Bethel and Dan as rivals to Jerusalem; at once he becomes, for the whole course of prophetic history, the "Jeroboam who made Israel to sin." At this point is found a prophetic story, strange in its details, but most important for its bearing on the spirit of the historic books. A "man of God" out of Judah denounces the idolatrous rites of Jeroboam, and is confirmed by the rending of the altar and withering of the king's arm. Jeroboam makes submission and is restored; when he offers hospitality the man of God refuses, being commanded to return without eating or drinking. But an "old prophet" of Bethel pursues him, renews the hospitable offer, and is again refused.

> And he said unto him, I also am a prophet as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast been disobedient unto the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of the which he said to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

The prophecy is fulfilled, and on his way back into Judah the man of God is slain by a lion. The prophet of Bethel finds his dead body.

> And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! And it came to pass, after

> he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones.

In this strange way is brought home to the reader the fact that, not only are the kingdoms divided, but there is a schism in prophecy itself; henceforward the false prophet in conflict with the true is an additional element of difficulty in the tangled politics of Israel.

It is unnecessary to follow the bare records of reigns which succeed; kings of Israel and Judah, with the exception of Asa, are alike pronounced evil. We soon reach, amongst kings of Israel, the name of Ahab, who takes for queen Jezebel of the Zidonians. Under her influence has been reached the nadir point of kingly revolt; it is no longer imperfect service of Jehovah that appears, but Baal has been enthroned in Jehovah's place. At once prophecy springs to its full height to meet the crisis; literary form catches the changed spirit, and story dominates history as we are abruptly introduced to the ministry of Elijah.

With great insight into the spirit of the narrative Mendelssohn, in his musical setting of Elijah's career, has violated conventional order by commencing, even before his overture, with the few words of recitative which convey Elijah's prediction of the three years' famine: it is against the background of this famine that the details of the crisis are presented. While brooks and rivers are drying up, Elijah is miraculously fed by ravens beside the brook Cherith; while all around hunger and death are doing their work, the good woman who shelters the prophet finds her barrel of meal and cruse of oil mysteriously renewed, and her son restored to life. When the drought is at its height, and the king with his ministers are searching the land for water, Elijah suddenly reappears, and the most dramatic of all Bible scenes is presented. Elijah demands to be confronted with the prophets of Baal; Ahab, always a hesitator between Jehovah and idols, dares not refuse. There is an echo from the renewal of the covenant under Joshua when Elijah demands of the assembled people, How long halt ye between two opinions? But the people answer not a word. In strange opposition the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal prolong their ecstatic worship from morning to noon, from noon to evening, amid the mockeries of Elijah. Then the prophet of the Lord, with his evening prayer, draws down the fire from heaven which consumes the sacrifice, and licks up the water in the trenches, while all the people shout, The Lord, he is God. The false prophets are slain by the brook Kishon, and at once there is a sound of abundance of rain; Elijah seems to be forcing the clouds into the sky by the vehemence of his prayers on Carmel, and in the exultation of the sudden relief joins the runners before the chariot of Ahab.

The prophet has triumphed: the man feels the reaction of physical and spiritual depression as he flees before the threats of Jezebel. His wanderings bring this chief of the prophets nearer and nearer to the scene of the original giving of the Law. Moses had fasted forty days and forty nights on the mount; Elijah, in the strength of angels' food, goes forty days to the same mount, where once the theocracy had been proclaimed amid thunder and the great fire and the sound of a more than human voice. And once more nature seems shaken with the approach of Deity.

> And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

Instinctively a modern reader listens for some deep spiritual truth, or some foundation principle of moral law, as the point to which all this succession of wonders has led up: what we actually hear is this: —

> Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

Nothing could more powerfully illustrate the true position of prophecy. The prophets are not, in the modern sense, spiritual pastors: they are the statesmen who make their stand for the theocracy in the political history of Israel. The joint ministry of Elijah and Elisha is to strike a unity through all that succeeds; the history of Israel to the end of the northern kingdom is no more than the expansion of the message of Horeb.

In that message Syria has been indicated as the instrument of Divine vengeance against Israel. What immediately follows[1] — told with vivid detail because of the prophetic personages involved — displays the kingdom of Syria passing from friendship into hostility against the kingdom of Israel. Judah is joined with Israel, its supple king Jehoshaphat at once serving Jehovah and making alliance with idol-worshippers. Hence we get the strangest of all prophetic scenes: Micaiah facing the false prophets of Ahab, and springing upon the allied kings his vision of the lying spirit put by God in the mouth of Ahab's prophets to lure him on to his doom. Under such gloomy auspices is fought the battle of Ramoth-gilead, in which Ahab, vainly disguised, falls by a bow drawn at a venture. It is other prophets who figure in these incidents, while Elijah has been continuing his first prophetic task of confronting Ahab with his crimes. And he lives to speak a word of doom to Ahab's son and successor, a last prophecy drawn from Elijah amid scenes of lightning strokes and the destruction of captains with their fifties.

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[1] *I Kings* xx, continued xxii.

Three words of command made up the prophecy of Horeb: the first to reach fulfilment is the mysterious succession of Elisha to the work of Elijah. The event is told of Elijah's ascent to heaven: as the fiery chariots disappear the mantle of Elijah is taken by Elisha, symbol of the double portion of his spirit. A long series of wonder stories follow, the design of which is to vindicate Elisha as the successor of Elijah. The waters of Jordan divide at his word; the foul spring is healed with salt; the mocking children are overtaken by destruction. In the next wonder once more Jehoshaphat is seen in alliance with Israel and demanding a prophet of the Lord: he is told of Elisha, "who poured water on the hands of

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[1] *I Kings* xxi, continued *II Kings* i.

Elijah," and Elisha foretells the miracle by which the water trenches, filled by no natural agency, glow blood red in the rising sun, and drive the Moabites to panic. The miracles of Elijah are repeated for his successor, as the poor woman's oil is multiplied, and the hospitable Shunammite receives her son back to life. Miraculously the poisoned mess is made harmless, the scanty bread multiplied. A little maiden, carried captive in the Syrian wars which are all this while raging, brings the captain of Syria's hosts to be healed of his leprosy by Elisha; accordingly — after a parenthetic miracle of the axe-head that swam — we find Elisha's power recognised in Samaria itself, and an expedition is sent against him, only to reveal to timid doubters the mountain full of chariots and horsemen round about Elisha. At last, when the siege of Samaria has reached the horror of women devouring their own children, the king, who witnesses it, exclaims, "God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day:" to such a culmination has the prophetic power of Elisha attained that he is recognised as sole dispenser of doom to Israel.

All this while Elisha has remained quiescent, the authority of his prophetic office none the less advancing: he now moves forward in the other two mysteries revealed on Horeb. Visiting Damascus he is received as a prophet; he looks into the face of the Syrian king's messenger Hazael, and weeps at the havoc he foresees Hazael will hereafter work upon Israel. The glimpse into the future has fanned a smouldering purpose: that very night Hazael assassinates his master and ascends the throne, divinely ordained instrument of woe to Israel from without, as Jehu is to be the instrument of vengeance in their midst.

There remains the final and climax stage in the fulfilment of the commission to Elijah and Elisha: prophetic story and secular history become for the time inextricably interwoven. The scene changes to Jezreel and its pleasant palace; Joram of Israel, wounded in the Syrian wars, is being nursed there, and thither comes Ahaziah of Judah — successor to the throne and alliance of Jehoshaphat — to visit his ally. Meanwhile among the captains of Israel facing the enemy at Ramoth-gilead is Jehu the son of Nimshi. An envoy of Elisha suddenly proclaims Jehu king, and avenger of the prophets against the house of Ahab. The word is caught up by eager fellow-captains; Jehu is hastily enthroned on heaped-up garments, and proclaimed king with the sound of trumpet. The "furious driving" of Jehu from Ramoth-gilead to Jezreel is a fitting symbol of the breathless succession of events with which this climax works itself out. King Joram is smitten between the arms the instant he sees the treachery and turns to flee. Ahaziah has a moment's warning, but escapes only to be slain in his flight. Jezebel is defiant to the last: she is hurled down from the window, and dogs devour her flesh. A mocking challenge is sent to the protectors of Ahab's sons in Samaria: bewildered and helpless they think it best to submit, and send the heads of Ahab's seventy sons in baskets, thus enabling Jehu to point to the ghastly sight as a proof that providence, not himself, is working the doom of Ahab's house. Next, accident plays its part: the brethren of Ahaziah (descendants therefore of Ahab) are coming from Judah to salute their kindred: they are taken alive and slain at the pit of the shearing house. With intrigue and feigned zeal for Baal Jehu draws the idolatrous priests into their temple at Samaria, in order to slay all at a stroke and make the house of Baal a draught-house. In only one point has the work of vengeance remained imperfect: Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and queen-mother in Judah, has set up Baal worship in Jerusalem itself; in a later section is narrated the revolution of Jehoiada, the priests crowning the youthful Joash, while Athaliah is slain, and the idolatrous worship purged from the land.

The last stage has been reached in the career of the northern kingdom. Where the narrative turns to Judah we do hear of righteous rulers to balance the wicked and the wavering; but for the kingdom of Israel history becomes a prophetic moralising upon a people's ruin. Jehu himself, his work of righteous vengeance accomplished, returns to his native sinfulness. At once Hazael, king of Syria, begins to cut Israel short; he and his successors fulfil all the prophecy of Horeb in afflicting Israel from the outside. There is indeed a partial recovery, and a second Jeroboam, under the prophetic ministry of Jonah, restores the border of Israel. But this is a last flicker of prosperity; faction and feud with neighbour peoples prepare the northern kingdom for a mightier foe. At last the Assyrians appear upon the scene; vainly met for a time by bribes, the tide of invasion returns resistless. The end is reached, and the ten tribes are carried into captivity; while in their place are established the mixed peoples who seek to fear Jehovah and at the same time serve their graven images, and so grow into the hated Samaritans of a later age.

The sacred history returns to simplicity where there is only the kingdom of Judah to be considered. Hezekiah brings back the zeal of David, and David's prosperity; his are the glorious days of Isaiah's prophecy, and the ominous Assyrian invasion is met by the wonderful overthrow of the hosts of Sennacherib. But the son more than undoes the work of the father; Manasseh seduces Judah to do evil more than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel, and the voice of prophecy declares how God "will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab." For a brief space brightness reappears with Josiah. The sudden discovery in his reign of the "Book of the Law" causes a wave of religious revival to spread over the whole people; idolatry is purged out of the land for a time, and even the altar of Jeroboam at Bethel is overthrown. But the reformation of Josiah is to be considered, not an arrest in the downfall of the kings, but an anticipation of a future period; here we have, not prophets standing for righteous statesmanship in national politics, but the discovery, in the Law, of a rallying point for the pious when Israel shall have ceased to be a nation. Accordingly, from the days of Josiah there is but the brief history of Judah's fall. What the Assyrians were for the northern kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar and his Chaldeans are for the kingdom of the south. At last Jerusalem itself suffers the horrors of a siege; it falls, and Judah follows Israel into captivity. The kingship has ceased to be; and the ministry of prophets is no longer the instrument through which the chosen nation will express its adherence to its God.

Stories of the Exile

The history of Israel is in the position of a river which runs for a time underground before it returns to view. There is no Bible narrative of the exile: we know indirectly that the captivity continues for some seventy years without break; also, that in the interval the Babylonian conquerors are themselves conquered, and their dominions pass into the hands of the Medes and Persians. But here again appears the importance of story as an adjunct to history: the seven stories of the exile cast their brilliant light upon successive points in the life of the captivity. Nowhere is the charm of story greater than in the books of *Daniel* and of *Esther;* and through these impressive narratives we are able to see how even in their exile the chosen people continue to witness for their God among the nations.

The distinction of Babylon among the peoples is that it is the land of mystery; the chief feature of its court is the band of astrologers, magicians, enchanters surrounding the throne, and so supreme is the national interest in this mystic unveiling of the future that the name 'Chaldean' is synonymous with 'soothsayer.' The first of the stories presents four youthful captives of Judah — Daniel and his three companions — who are to undergo a three years' course of royal diet and training in the learning of the Chaldeans, until they are fit to join the band of the king's enchanters. But diet is a part of Israel's law; and Daniel purposes in his heart that he will not defile himself with the king's meat. He challenges for himself and his companions the test of experience; at the end of the period of training not only are the youths of Judah the fairest to look upon, but the king when he makes his examination finds them "ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm." Thus the law of Israel has won a triumph over the regimen of Babylon.

While the period of training, apparently, is still in progress, a sudden outburst of royal panic dooms the whole body of wise men to destruction, because they fail, not to interpret a dream of the king's, but to tell the dream itself which has been forgotten. Daniel interposes to save them, believing that by prayer even this impossibility may be accomplished. He stands before the court of Babylon to testify that "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." Impressively he makes known the thoughts that have passed from the king's heart, and the far future which they portend: the image with head all of gold, suggesting the flawless glory of Nebuchadnezzar; the inferior kingdoms that shall succeed, symbolised by the silver, brass, iron, and clay; above all, the stone cut out without hands smiting the image to pieces and becoming a mountain, by which is made known a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, but shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms. Amid oblations and incense Daniel's God is acknowledged, and the Judean captive himself is made chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon.

In the intoxication of that glory which this dream had symbolised Nebuchadnezzar erects an image of himself on the plain of Dura, and all rulers of all his provinces must at its dedication bow down and worship to the strains of harmonious instruments. The three companions of Daniel alone refuse: they stand firm before the king's wrath, and his threat, "Who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?" They are cast bound into the burning fiery furnace, heated seven times beyond its wonted heat. The unique word 'astonied' expresses the emotion of the tyrant as he beholds them walking free in the midst of the fire, and in their company a mystic fourth; they come out from the furnace unharmed, nor has the smell of fire passed on them. The omnipotent king makes a decree that every people, nation, and language which speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego shall be destroyed: 'because there is no other god that is able to deliver after this sort."

The fourth story is in form a royal decree; in this solemn manner does Nebuchadnezzar relate, for the information of all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, the wonderful incident of a dream of his interpreted by Daniel, and the still more wonderful dispensation of heaven by which the dream has been fulfilled. It was a dream of a fair and towering tree cut down, and its stump left in the earth with a band of iron and brass, until a mystic period had passed over it. So, at the very moment when Nebuchadnezzar was contemplating Babylon as the city built by his might and for his glory, the word had gone forth; and he had been driven from men, and his dwelling had been with the beasts of the field, he had eaten grass like oxen, and his body had been wet with the dew of heaven; until as he lifted up his eyes unto heaven his understanding returned unto him, and his majesty and brightness was restored. He blessed therefore the Most High, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion; all the inhabitants of earth are reputed as nothing; none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Nebuchadnezzar has been succeeded by his son Belshazzar, and Daniel has been almost forgotten. The dynasty has reached the last day of its allotted existence, and the last orgy of the king and his companions is running riot, with the sacred vessels of Jehovah among the drinking cups of the dissolute host. Suddenly a mystic hand is beheld writing upon the wall, and the trembling enchanters strive in vain to decipher the doom: only the queen remembers the wise counsellor of the late reign. Daniel stands once more before the court of Babylon, to recite the forgotten lesson of Nebuchadnezzar's fall and restoration, and to read the mystic words NUMBERED, WEIGHED, DIVIDED. That very night the conquering Medes burst in upon the Chaldeans; and the one crisis of world history that happens during the captivity is seen to be the work of Israel's God.

Captive Israel in now under the strangest form of rule ever devised by man — absolutism limited only by its own absoluteness: a kingship that may decree what it will, yet is limited by its own decree, for "the law of the Medes and Persians altereth not." Under Darius Daniel is a prime favourite; envy sees that he can be assailed only through his fidelity to his national faith. Accordingly a decree is procured from the unthinking despot, that for thirty days no prayer shall be offered to any god but himself. Daniel remains unchanged in his devotions and is denounced: the king labours all day to deliver him, but is confronted by the "law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not." In sore distress Darius must at last order that Daniel be cast into the den of lions, not without hope that even here he may find protection. When the morrow reveals the wonder of the lions' mouths shut by angelic power, Darius breaks out with a decree to all peoples, nations, and languages, that all shall tremble and fear before the God of Israel; his is the kingdom that shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

There remains one more, the most elaborate of all scriptural stories. The hatred of neighbour peoples, which had troubled Israel through its whole career, pursues the exiles in captivity, and at one moment an Amalekite, Haman, becomes the minister and favourite of King Ahasuerus. Out of all the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the empire a single man refuses to bow the knee before the favourite. When Haman learns that this Mordecai is a Jew, he prepares a mighty revenge. The lot is solemnly cast in his presence to select a day of doom, and then Haman procures a decree from the king that on that day the Jews shall be extirpated from all the provinces of the vast empire. He knows not how Providence has been working beforehand to prepare for this crisis, in elevating a Jewish maiden, Esther, to the throne; she now stands forth to deliver her people. A girl in years, she works salvation in a girlish manner. Taking her life in her hand, she presents herself unsummoned before the king. When he holds out the sceptre of mercy Esther, with youthful simplicity, petitions that the king and Haman will come to a banquet which she will prepare. The flattery lulls all suspicions of Haman; and the king, accustomed only to the voluptuous orgies of a harem, tastes for a moment the sweets of domestic bliss. Twice in this way Esther faces her king and her foe; then, casting off the veil, she denounces the plot by which her own kindred are to be slain, and the king's empire deprived of a serviceable people. Haman is hanged upon the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai; yet there still remains the fatal decree, enrolled in the laws of Medes and Persians which alter not. But Mordecai succeeds to his rival's place, and devises the counter decree by which the Jews have leave to defend themselves. Hence when the allotted day arrives the blow intended for the chosen nation falls upon their foes. And from the midst of the captivity comes the Jewish feast "of Lots," in honour of a deliverance wrought for them by God amid their troubles, and brought about through the unbending fidelity of Mordecai and the youthful beauty of Esther.

Chronicles of the Return and the Jewish Church

When the historical literature of Scripture is resumed after the exile a marked change is seen, both in its spirit and its form. It was a nation that had been carried into captivity; it is no longer a nation that returns. To great part of the hosts of Israel, borne away from the northern and the southern kingdoms, no release from their captivity was ever granted; they became merged in the national life of the east. When the proclamation of Cyrus granted permission to return, not all who heard availed themselves of the invitation; it is said that there "rose up the heads of fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem."[1] It was a spiritual purpose that brought the exiles back, and they proceeded to organise themselves as a spiritual community, around the two central ideas of a restored Temple service and a study of the Law under leadership of scribes. Thus, in place of the Hebrew People we have henceforward the Jewish Church. The literary product of the new community consists of the biblical books of *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*. The last two deal with the return; in the *Chronicles* all previous history is retold, in a spirit conformable to the new conception of the relationship between God and the remnant of his chosen people. Previous historians have been prophets, the statesmen of Israel who sought to translate religious ideas into political action; their works combined annals of secular events with epic stories, of which patriarchs, judges, prophets, were the heroes. In the new history the prophets have their place, but not their former prominence. The distinction between history and story can no longer be made; the whole becomes uniform history, and, if one part be expanded in more vivid detail than another, it is because it bears upon the new religious ideals. In a word, we are entering upon the Ecclesiastical History of Israel.

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[1] *Ezra* i. 5.

It is interesting to compare the two histories where they touch common ground. The most striking difference is that the whole history of northern Israel, with its brilliant prophetic episodes of Elijah and Elisha, entirely disappears from *The Chronicles;* from the moment of the schism the ten tribes are regarded as outside the pale of the Jewish Church. The ecclesiastical history ignores the sin of David, and the long sequel of family feuds, including the rebellion of Absalom and the disputed succession, all of which, in *Samuel* and in *Kings*, had covered half the ground of David's reign, being there regarded as fulfilment of Nathan's prophecy that the sword should not depart from David's house. The lyric compositions of David quoted in *Samuel* are omitted in *Chronicles*, though to balance these the latter work, characteristically, gives the sacred hymns of the ritual worship which David established; it is equally characteristic that the elegy on Saul and Jonathan is in the chronicle history replaced by a genealogy of Saul's house.[1] On the other hand, any point that may have a bearing on Temple service is sure to be expanded by the new historians into detail. In the incident of the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, the prophetic history had merely mentioned the death of Uzzah and the terror it inspired, whereas the chronicle account brings out how this was a judgment on the neglect of levitical service for the carrying of the ark, and adds long lists of appointments made in this spirit by David for his second attempt to escort the ark.[2] Similarly, while the account of the building and dedication of Solomon's Temple is much the same in both works, the chronicle history contains in addition, at great length, David's preparations for the work to be carried out by his son, and the regular courses of priestly service which he established.[3] In later history it is remarkable that *Kings* relates the reign of Manasseh without a hint of his repentance; *Chronicles* adds the repentance and restoration of this ruler, in close connection no doubt with the good works he accomplished in strengthening the defensive power of the holy city.[1]

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[1] Compare *II Samuel* i with *I Chronicles* ix. 35.

[2] Compare *II Samuel* vi. 6–12 with *I Chronicles* xiii. 1–14 and xv, xvi.

[3] *I Chronicles* xvii, xxii–xxix.

The reigns of individual rulers come to have quite a different colour from the changed spirit of the history. In *Kings* the brief annals of Abijam's reign leave no impression but that of war and wickedness; the ecclesiastical historian relates at length this king's wars with Israel, and presents him as a hero of Judah, whose address to the enemy deserves lengthy citation, as embodying most powerfully the whole spirit of the books of *Chronicles*.[2]

> Ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hands of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made you for gods. Have ye not driven out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the peoples of other lands? So that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods? But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and we have priests ministering unto the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites in their work: and they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt offerings and sweet incense; the shewbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him. And, behold, God is with us at our head, and his priests with the trumpets of alarm to sound an alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD, the God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper.

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[1] Compare *II Kings* xxi and *II Chronicles* xxxiii.

[2] Compare *I Kings* xv. 1–9 with *II Chronicles* xiii. The *Chronicles* name the king Abijah.

It is with the same zeal to find the new religious fervour in the ancient history that the chronicler delights to tell how, in the reign of Asa, the people entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, and "that whoever would not seek the Lord, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman."[1]

When we come to the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, which deal with the return, a further change is to be noted in literary form; here we have not even history, but historical documents, the materials out of which history may be constructed. One who reads in ordinary versions of the Bible is here in danger, unless he use great caution, of mistaking for continuous narrative what is really a series of disconnected chronicles; between one sentence and the next there may be a gap in time and a change of subject.

The first part of *The Book of Ezra*[2] relates the return under Zerubbabel. This has for its object the rebuilding of the Temple. In the seventh month the returned exiles come from their cities to the ruined Jerusalem, set the altar upon its base, and recommence the daily offerings and the periodical feasts. At length they lay the foundation of the new Temple, amid rejoicings of the younger men, while the older men weep at the thought of the more glorious Temple that has been destroyed. The peoples who have inhabited the neighbourhood during the captivity, mingling the service of Jehovah with idolatry, seek to unite with the men of the return and are coldly repulsed; they then make interest with the Persian court, and succeed in restraining the work of rebuilding until the second year of Darius. Under appeals from the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the work is then resumed. A second attempt is made to oppose, but the ruling of Darius forces the governor and his companions to assist the Temple builders. The Temple is thus dedicated, and the courses of the Levites resumed. The latter part of *The Book of Ezra* relates to another return, under the leadership of Ezra himself. It contains Ezra's memoirs of the journey, and shows the zeal with which he threw himself into the reform by which marriages between the restored exiles and the peoples of the land were put down. The personal narrative is prefaced with an introduction by some editor, who continues it where Ezra's own writing abruptly ceases.

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[1] *II Chronicles* xv. 13-14.

[2] For references see *Chronicles* in the Appendix.

We reach a further stage of the return with *The Book of Nehemiah;* it is not now the Temple, but the walls of the holy city that are to be restored. The strong personality of this great leader gives a vivid interest to the successive parts of his narrative: the mournfulness which draws from his royal patrons permission to return; the solitary night ride in which he views the ruined fortifications; the organisation of the builders in companies vying with one another in the good work; the scornful opposition of powerful neighbours, and the resource with which Nehemiah meets it, prepared at all moments alike for building and fighting; the noble spirit with which the governor leads the way in foregoing taxes and exaction of debts, lest the poorer exiles suffer oppression; the wariness with which every trap set to entice Nehemiah himself from the work is evaded. The rebuilding is carried to completion, and the defence of the city regularly organised. Later on in the same book[1] are more memoirs of Nehemiah, dealing with such incidents as the Dedication of the Walls, a Purification of the Temple, and Reforms of Sabbath Observance and of Marriage Customs. In the middle part of the book we have (besides certain Statistics of the Return) the important incident of the Renewal of the Covenant[2] under Ezra and Nehemiah.

In this last-mentioned incident the return has attained full realisation, and the historical literature of the Old Testament may fitly conclude. The people gather themselves from their cities as one man to the broad place before the water gate of Jerusalem. Ezra the scribe stands "upon a pulpit of wood": the first appearance of the pulpit in sacred history is a reminder how the nation has been replaced by the church. The reading of the Law day after day, the weeping of the people and the attempts to comfort them, make the whole a religious revival service; the dwelling in booths suggests the modern camp meeting. Toward the close of the month comes the most solemn assembly of all. The people stand up and read in the book of the Law a fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confess and worship the Lord. The Levites lead them in a long survey of their whole history: the covenant between God and Abraham to give his seed the land of promise; the long series of providential mercies by which the promise was made good; the persistent unfaithfulness of the people, punished by deliverance into the hands of enemies; the mercies that have saved them again and again, and even now not made a full end of them: —

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[1] xii. 27; for references generally see *Chronicles* in the Appendix.

[2] vii. 73–x.

> Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the travail seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. Howbeit thou art just in all that has come upon us; for thou hast dealt truly, but we have done wickedly. . . . Behold, we are servants this day, and as for the land which thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have power over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And yet for all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, our Levites, and our priests, seal unto it.

The covenant so often renewed between God and the chosen nation is renewed yet once more: but those who now enter into it have forfeited their independent nationality, and are binding themselves into a new community, for the service of Jehovah's Temple, and the observance of his sacred Law.

An Epilogue to Old Testament History

The historical books of the Old Testament have been reviewed; but there is outside these historical books a literary work which may in some sort stand as epilogue to the history of Israel. The last twenty-seven chapters of our *Book of Isaiah* make up the rhapsody, or spiritual drama, of "Zion Redeemed." It is a stupendous literary monument: the form is magnificent, though obscure to a modern reader; the underlying thought is of such deep spiritual significance that this part of the Bible is the chief foundation alike of Hebrew and of Christian theology. We are not concerned here with the work as a whole; but a single one out of its many trains of interest may be followed, as one which brings the history of Israel into the unity of a single thought.

A dramatic vision is opened[1] of the nations of the world summoned before the bar of God. In rapid sketch we have the idolatrous peoples, to the farthest islands of the west, assembling with panic:[2] the carpenter encourages the goldsmith, hammer-smoother and anvil-smiter look to the soldering of the graven images, that they may stand in the shock of confronting the true God. For Israel, as its exiles from the ends of the earth obey the summons,[3] there are tender words of protection, and the wilderness blossoms for them while they pass through. The scene is to be conceived as complete:[4] the nations on the one side, Israel on the other, before the judgment seat of heaven. Then Jehovah makes challenge to the idols of the nations.

> Declare ye the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or shew us things for to come.

"Former things" and "things for to come" are brought together here: the gods of the nations are challenged to interpret the whole train of events from first to last, to put upon the course of history such meaning as will be seen when Jehovah unfolds his world plan. The challenge is met with silence:[1] the idols are but vanity and nothingness. Then is unfolded the interpretation of Jehovah: and it is the proclamation of Israel as his servant.[2]

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[1] Chapter xli. 1. The *islands* [of Greece, etc.] are the usual western limit of the prophetic world: a summons to the 'islands' is equivalent to a summons of the whole earth. Compare verse 5 and xlix. 1. To appreciate fully the dramatic character of this portion of *Isaiah* it should be read in a properly printed text, e.g. the *Isaiah* volume of the *Modern Reader's Bible*.

[2] xli. 5–7.

[3] xli. 8–20.

[4] xli. 21.

> Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgement to the nations. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgement in truth. He shall not burn dimly nor be bruised, till he have set judgement in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.

To most readers these words are familiar in their secondary applications; we must not forget that in the context where they originally occur their reference is to Israel, who is Jehovah's Servant to make him known to the nations. Not by violence and conquest (as Israel had once dreamed), but by agencies gentle as the light is he to win the peoples to Jehovah's law. But, the proclamation goes on to show, Israel has been blind to his sacred mission, and by his sins has fallen into the prison houses of the Gentiles.

> Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that is at peace with me, and blind as the LORD's servant? Thou seest many things, but thou observest not; his ears are open, but he heareth not. It pleased the LORD, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify the law, and make it honourable. But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid

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[1] xli. 24, 28–29.

[2] Chapter xlii. 1–9 and xlii. 14–xliii. 8; the intervening passage (xlii. 10–13) is one of the numerous lyric interruptions of Jehovah's speech.

> in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore. . . . But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee.

Gracious promises of redemption flow forth, up to the climax —

> Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

Thus with Israel's deliverance from the prison houses of Babylon comes at the same time his enlightenment to his spiritual mission.

The moment of time making the occasion to which all this proclamation is pointing is, of course, the deliverance from captivity under Cyrus.[1] God has called one from the north and from the rising of the sun, to tread the nations like clay, and set Jehovah's exiles free. Yet this salvation is not wrought for Israel's sake alone.[2]

> For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; he is God; that formed the earth and made it; he established it, he created it not a waste, he formed it to be inhabited. . . . Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.

It is thus reiterated that in Israel's salvation a world is being saved. Babylon, in all its pride of conquest, had been but an unconscious instrument of God.[3] The victorious career of Cyrus was but a single detail in a Divine plan: the vanquished nations had been the price paid to Cyrus for the deliverance he was about to effect; the peoples had crouched, not before Cyrus, but before the God that was hidden in him:[4] —

[1] Chapter xli. 25; compare Chapter xlv.

[2] Chapter xlv. 18–24.

[3] Chapter xlvii, especially verse 6.

[4] Chapter xlv. 14.

> The labour of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia, and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine; they shall go after thee; in chains they shall come over: and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee: "Surely God is in thee: and there is none else, there is no God. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."

As the drama progresses we find Israel speaking, awakened at length to his mission as Jehovah's Servant.[1]

> Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye peoples, from far; the LORD hath called me from the womb, . . . and he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified. But I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity: yet surely my judgement is with the LORD, and my recompence with my God. And now saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel may be gathered unto him: . . . yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Later on in the rhapsody, among the Songs of Zion Exalted, we find one which presents redeemed Zion in its mission of witnessing to the Gentiles.[2] Jehovah speaks: —

> Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee.

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[1] Chapter xlix.

[2] Chapter lv: verses 4–5, 8–11, are the words of Jehovah; the rest the words of Zion. See the *Isaiah* volume of the *Modern Reader's Bible*, pages 178–180, and 217.

With this is heard the song of Zion addressing the nations, commissioned to admit them into the covenant of David.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
  And he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat;
Yea, come, buy wine and milk,
  Without money and without price. . . .

Incline your ear, and come unto me,
  Hear, and your soul shall live:
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
  Even the sure mercies of David. . . .

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found,
  Call ye upon him while he is near:
Let the wicked forsake his way,
  And the unrighteous man his thoughts:

And let him return unto the LORD,
  And he will have mercy upon him;
And to our God,
  For he will abundantly pardon.

All nature exults in the climax of a world of nations thronging to Zion.

For ye shall go out with joy,
  And be led forth with peace:
The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing,
  And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Thus the whole of history, otherwise a chaos, becomes a clear unity in the light of the Divine plan. When the covenants made by God with all mankind had, again and again, broken down in a triumph of sin, one nation is chosen out of the world to be God's peculiar people; not however for their own sakes only, but that in their seed all peoples of the earth might be blessed. Israel, unfaithful to his God, sinks into the idolatry against which he was to have been a living protest; the chosen people are for their sins scattered through the idolatrous nations, as through so many prison houses. Captivity recalls the Israelites to their sacred work; it brings them also in touch with the peoples who through them are to be blessed. Then — like the completing of an electric circuit that brings the flash of discovery — comes the conquering career of Cyrus, and the deliverance that makes the Divine plan clear. Israel emerges from Babylon, no longer assimilated to the secular government of the nations, but a people organised for a spiritual work, waiting until the Church of Israel shall expand into the Church Universal.

Such is the History of the People of Israel as Presented by Themselves.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AS PRESENTED BY ITSELF

Between the point where the narrative of the Old Testament leaves off and that where the narrative of the New Testament begins there is an interval of some four centuries. During this period the Jews changed little, the rest of the world was wholly transformed. The seat of power had shifted from the far east to the far west; the civilised world had become the Roman empire; by permission of Rome Herod and other kings reigned in the holy land, and in time a Roman governor was found in Jerusalem. A new intellectual life had commenced for the world under the leadership of the Greeks; though this affected the Jews of Palestine comparatively little, it had permeated other countries into which the Christian Church was destined to extend. In the midst of this changing world the Jews from the time of the return had never lost their distinctiveness as a spiritual people. The religion of the Law, under leadership of scribes and rabbis, had gradually stiffened into a system of fanaticism; the 'Tradition of the Elders' had covered over the Law itself with a host of unwritten precepts, themes of endless disputations, and making life a burden of ceremonial usages and things to be avoided. Geographically, the holy land now appears in the form of three provinces: the southern province is Judæa, focus of the religious zeal of the people; there is an inferior province of Galilee round the northern lake; between is the province of the Samaritans, hated as descendants of the mixed peoples who inhabited the holy land during the exile, and mingled worship of Jehovah with heathen superstitions. Among religious parties two stand out as prominent: the Pharisees, great upholders of traditions, the worship of angels, and the doctrine of a future life; the Sadducees, who appear in the New Testament as opponents of the resurrection doctrine and the belief in angels, and who take their stand on the Law itself. Both agree in hating the Roman conqueror, and looking eagerly for the Messiah of prophecy, who should lead the Jews to the conquest of the world.

If we make a proper arrangement of our materials it is possible to see that the literary characteristics distinguishing narrative in the Old Testament are, with the natural modifications, continued in the New Testament. Old Testament narrative is a combination of history and story: connected annals of mere events, and vivid incidents which from time to time bring out the real spirit of the history. But where the theme is the sacred work of Jesus, and its continuation by his successors, the eminent points will be, not incidents that make a subject for stories, but rather thoughts which find expression in discourse. Accordingly, the gospels are made up of the Acts and Words of Jesus: the Words — of parable or discourse — scattered through the Acts just as the stories are interspersed in the annals of the older narrative. Again, one book contains the 'Acts of the Apostles'; but for the successive Words, or discourses in which the apostles expressed the spirit of their ministry, we have to go outside this book to the separate works entitled 'Epistles.' It is practicable, however, to introduce the several epistles at their proper points of connection with the narrative; thus by a combination of *The Book of Acts* with *The Epistles* the second stage of the history can be assimilated to the first. In this way the present chapter proposes to follow the History of the New Testament Church as Presented by Itself. It may be added that of the four gospels available two belong to a different division of literature, and will be considered at the proper place; while that of St. Mark seems to be a simple succession of memoirs. It is *The Gospel of St. Luke* that will be followed here; both because his is the narrative which is continued in *Acts*, and also because St. Luke's preface manifests him as having the bent of an historian, who out of the best traditions "traces the course of all things accurately from the first," and then "writes in order."

The Life of Jesus

Where the purpose is not to narrate or even sketch the history, but simply to introduce to the literature in which it is contained, it may well happen that the most important parts of the history are precisely the parts that need the briefest treatment. The incidents of Christ's life are so familiar, and the style of St. Luke so perspicuous, that nothing is requisite here except to indicate the principles of connection in the author's mind, which seem to govern the order of narration and the prominence given to different parts. In the preliminary section, which precedes the ministry of Jesus, even this is unnecessary. It is obvious how St. Luke has carried his inquiries back to the earliest announcement received by the parents of the birth that is coming, alike of Jesus and his forerunner John; there follow the births of the two, the testimony borne to Jesus when he is presented in the Temple, the incident of his boyhood showing his attraction to the house of his Father. The ministry of John then appears as a call to repentance, pointing to a greater successor; the successor is divinely indicated when Jesus comes to be baptized. The baptism is followed by the temptation in the wilderness; and then the way is left free for Jesus to commence his ministry.

The ministry of Jesus, prior to the final incidents in Jerusalem, appears in Luke's narrative to fall into two main divisions.[1] The first is the ministry in Galilee. With an historian's instinct, Luke makes his first incident the appearance of Jesus in his own city, and his claim to be the Redeemer pictured in *The Book of Isaiah*. With this are associated what would seem to be typical sketches of his daily life: a general work of healing and notable examples, casting out of devils, preaching in the synagogues and prayer in desert places, the call of followers. Soon opposition begins to show itself: the forgiveness of sins appears to the Pharisees blasphemy, objection is taken to companying with publicans and sinners, to works of necessity and mercy on the sabbath; Jesus makes answer to all. There is the first suggestion of organisation in the choice of the twelve disciples; with these before him Jesus speaks the Sermon on the Mount, which embodies his general moral teaching. We now find a group of more notable events: a Roman centurion recognises the authority of Christ; a youth is raised from the dead; the doubting message from John the Baptist brings out how the popular religious movement of the hour is pronounced an inferior dispensation; the beautiful incident of the sinful woman stealing in to the Pharisee's feast to anoint the feet of Jesus marks the novelty of the religion, in which one who loves much appears more important than one who has little to be forgiven. The company of followers seems to attain further organisation when to the twelve is added a band of women who minister of their substance. Jesus now, with his parable of the Sower, inaugurates a mode of teaching which makes a distinction between the inner body of disciples, who are admitted to the interpretation, and the outer world, who rest content with the word of parable. Round the shores of the lake as a scene are grouped a series of impressive events: calming of the stormy sea, casting out the legion of devils, raising Jairus's daughter from the dead. Then the band of followers is further organised for missionary work, and the twelve are sent out to preach and heal. At last we reach the climax of this section, and the turning point in the life of Jesus. Peter speaks his recognition of the Christ: Jesus immediately follows this with the new revelation that the Son of man is to suffer and die, and the new religion is founded on a self-denial that must be ready to give up life itself. To crown this complete revelation comes the Transfiguration, and Jesus discourses with the types of Law and Prophets on the decease about to be accomplished at Jerusalem. When all are astonished at the newly seen "majesty of God," Jesus insists again upon the coming death; when they are moved with expectation of a wonderful revolution, he uses the symbol of a child in their midst to point the lesson, He that is least among you is great.

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[1] For references, see *Life of Jesus* in the Appendix.

We now read that Jesus "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem": this Way to Jerusalem is the next main division of St. Luke's narrative, and through the succession of events we can plainly feel the growing expectation of some 'kingdom of God' to be revealed at the journey's end. Sometimes the order of incidents is determined by connection with local spots on the route, which have been fixed by the accurate historian. Thus, the way lies through Samaria: local hostility draws passion from the disciples, which Jesus rebukes, and (a little later) in his parable of the Good Samaritan he extends the idea of neighbour to all mankind. Similarly, we are introduced to the home of Mary and Martha; with one "certain place" are connected the Lord's Prayer and its accompanying parable of the Importunate Friend, with another the incident of the ten lepers, of whom only one returned to give thanks for his healing; with Jericho we get the stories of blind Bartimæus and Zacchæus. But for the most part the thread of connection running through this part of the narrative is the growing expectation of the kingdom. Amid the great things that are being looked for the spirit of mammon begins to appear: an invitation to Jesus to arbitrate in a question of an estate draws forth the indignant parable of the Rich Fool, thinking only of new storehouses while his last day was upon him; and a little later we have the parables of the Unjust Steward, of the Rich Man and the Beggar Lazarus. The growing hopes of Christ's followers are met by growing opposition from outside. On the one hand, the miracles of healing are ascribed to demon agency; on the other hand, a sign from heaven is demanded. The omission by Jesus of ceremonial ablution in a Pharisee's house leads to a denunciation of the whole tradition of ceremonial observances, and of the Pharisees and lawyers who bind this burden on the people; at last the parable of the Supper, to which the invited guests came not, but the blind and lame were brought in from streets and lanes, is accepted as a final breach between the new teacher and the spiritual aristocracy of his day. All through this part of the narrative the suggestion of ever increasing multitudes reflects the advancing expectation of the kingdom to be revealed. Jesus has to repress the ardour of those about him, with discourse of the narrow way, of counting the cost; it is a mixed multitude, and when objection is taken to the presence of publicans and sinners we have for answer the parables of the Lost Sheep, of the Prodigal Son. At the close of this section expression is given to the general spirit of inquiry, whether the kingdom is immediately to appear. Jesus seems in vain to insist that this kingdom "cometh not with observation"; he enlarges upon the spirit of preparedness, of praying without fainting, and characteristic parables enforce this teaching — parables of the Unjust Judge, the Pharisee and the Publican, of the Good and Evil Servants, and how they used their talents while awaiting their lord.

In the final division of St. Luke's gospel, which presents Jesus in Jerusalem, the course of events moves on with the utmost simplicity through the most pregnant days of the sacred history. We have the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, followed by the cleansing of the

Temple. Then representatives of the ruling classes challenge the authority of the new leader, or endeavour to entangle him with carefully contrived questions: Jesus makes answer to each challenge or question, but meets the general spirit which has prompted them with the parable of the Husbandmen, who, after slaying their lord's messengers, hesitated not at last to slay the heir himself. The sight of the splendid Temple draws from Jesus the unveiling of the future troubles, in which not one stone of the great building shall be left standing upon another. At last we have the Passover, the arrest of Jesus and his trial, the Crucifixion and Resurrection. The risen Lord, first to the disciples in their walk to Emmaus, then to the whole body gathered at Jerusalem, unfolds the scripture concerning himself: —

> Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things.

In these words is given the commission to the apostles. The acts of these apostles in carrying out this commission make the second part of the New Testament history.

The Acts of the Apostles

To the book entitled *The Acts of the Apostles* objection has been made by some readers on the ground of the imperfect cohesion of its parts, as if the purpose found to underlie its latter part was different from the purpose of the earlier sections; on the ground again of the abrupt conclusion suggestive of a work left imperfect. I would say, on the contrary, that as a piece of literature *The Book of Acts* is singularly complete and coherent, if regard be had to the purpose of the whole as laid down in the title. To the apostles a certain commission has been given: they are witnesses of Christ "both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."[1] Accordingly, the book relates, with fulness and simplicity, the witness in Jerusalem, and again in the rest of the holy land. But how is it possible to present the witnessing "unto the uttermost part of the earth"? It is clear that a book which confines itself to the original apostles can deal with this work of all time only in embryo: it can display typical movements, germs of infinite expansions in the future. This is what *The Book of Acts* does: it follows successive widenings, in the classes of people reached by the word, in the instruments by which the work is carried forward: when the chief agent of this expansion is seen in the metropolis of the civilised world a natural place is found for this embryonic history of Christianity to stop. But though as a narrative *Acts* is complete, its history may be made yet more complete by bringing to bear upon it other parts of the New Testament, which will supply what narrative cannot accomplish. In the growth of the Christian Church the most important element is the expansion, not of area, but of ideas: the epistles of the apostles supplement the narrative of their acts, and reflect the advancing mind of the church. It is thus by a combination of narrative *Acts* and apostolic *Epistles* that the New Testament presents the church history of the period it covers.

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[1] *Acts* i. 8.

I *

The witness at Jerusalem is commenced when the city is at its fullest for the Feast of Pentecost. The apostles, with their small band of followers, had waited in quietness and prayer for the supernatural manifestation which was to be a signal for their work to begin. It comes on the day of Pentecost, in the rushing, mighty wind, and the "tongues parting asunder like as of fire," while, when the apostles speak, all who listen hear each in his own language. Thus the miracle of Babel, which in the Old Testament had accompanied the dispersal of races previous to the call of a peculiar people for God, has been now reversed. Like the supernatural emblems of prophecy, this gift of tongues remains through the early days of the church, to symbolise the mighty work at last begun, of drawing all the diverse races of mankind into one universal fold. When Peter speaks for his brethren, it is the resurrection of Jesus on which he takes his stand. The word brings converts by thousands, who unite into a fellowship, with community of life, and meetings for teaching and worship. A notable miracle of the apostles brings upon them the attack of the ruling authorities; it is the party of the Sadducees that is in power, and they are scandalised at the clamorous assertion of a resurrection. But the followers of Jesus are only made more staunch by persecution. A more determined uprising of official authority follows, with threats even of death; but the influence of Gamaliel prevails, and the council are induced to let the new

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* For these divisions, and references generally, see *Acts of the Apostles* in the Appendix.

movement take its course, in the hope that "if this work be of men, it will be overthrown."

We soon come upon the significant sentence that "there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews," first appearance of the two elements within the fellowship of the apostles, the conflict of which was to make an early phase of Christian history. At this point, however, it is no more than a question of administration, and this is easily met by the appointment of officers to supplement the more spiritual work of the apostles. Of these officers the chief is Stephen; his powerful words as combatant for the new teaching draw fierce opposition, culminating in a trial before the Sanhedrin and the first Christian martyrdom. Among those who stand approvingly at this judicial murder is the young Pharisee Saul. The persecution thus commenced extends, and drives the followers of Jesus out of Jerusalem; in this way the evangelisation of Samaria and Galilee and the remoter parts of Judæa is accomplished. But the persecution is as widespread as the preaching: Saul is on his way to Damascus to make arrests when he is overtaken by the heavenly vision, and the spiritual experiences which transform him from a persecutor of the faith to its leading champion. After this event the persecution of the new Way seems to cease for a time; we read that the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified.

We have proceeded thus far in our apostolic history: of the original commission to the apostles two portions have been fully executed; the immense third — the witness to the uttermost part of the earth — remains, yet already that powerful personality has appeared through

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whose agency chiefly the new work of the church is to be executed. What follows next is not a territorial, but a spiritual expansion. Wherever the gospel had spread before this it had gone only to Jews or Judaising Greeks: the new movement has now to traverse the gulf that separates between Jew and Gentile, the chosen nation with their life of legal ceremony, and the uncleanness of uncircumcised peoples outside the ranks of Israel. At crises like these there always appears, in the narrative of *The Acts*, the supernatural power that is behind human agency. It is prophetic vision that beckons to the new departure. The Roman Cornelius, in Cæsarea, sees his vision bidding send for Peter; Peter on the housetop in Joppa beholds the symbol of the fourfooted and creeping things, and hears the word, What God has cleansed call not thou unclean. Peter accompanies the messengers, and, preaching to the Gentile audience in the house of Cornelius, recognises the gift of tongues and all the outward signs of the Holy Ghost: he dares the act of baptism. The brethren in Judæa hear and inquire: upon receiving Peter's testimony they cannot withhold their witness, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." As we read on we feel how we have entered upon a new epoch. It soon appears how Antioch has become as truly a centre for Gentile Christianity as Jerusalem was a centre of Judaism. It is now that the new name 'Christians' appears: the early converts had been regarded only as a 'way' or order of the Jews. And if the historian proceeds at this point to narrate the persecution in Jerusalem, under which James was slain and Peter imprisoned and delivered by ministry of angels, it is only, as it were, to wind up this first chapter of the Christian history, in which Jerusalem and the twelve apostles had been the centre. Henceforth interest is transferred to Paul and the extension of Christianity over the vast Gentile world, the other apostles and Jerusalem appearing only incidentally, and as they affect Gentile history.

2

New departures in ideals of Christian work are likely to bring new institutions. We now find recognised as a leading instrument for the evangelisation of the world the Missionary Journey, by which might be organised local communities with independent Christian life of their own, yet linked through their founders or other missionaries with Christian communities elsewhere. It is in the Gentile metropolis of Antioch that this institution of the Missionary Journey first makes its appearance, amid prophecy and fasting, and special influence of the Holy Ghost. The two first ordained to the work are Paul, whose wide culture marked him out as fittest to encounter Gentile thought, and Barnabas, the Hebrew who had been the first to appreciate Paul's special value, and had brought him to Antioch as soon as Gentiles had been admitted by Peter. The first missionary journey is described, with details enough to show the method of working; more especially, the way in which the apostles carry their message to Jews first, and only on the opposition of the Jews turn to the Gentiles. Miracles attend the preaching of the missionaries, persecution follows them from city to city; in Lystra they have the double experience of being worshipped as deities and then stoned as malefactors.

It was inevitable that, sooner or later, the two elements within the fellowship of the apostles should come into conflict. It had needed the authority of miracle even to introduce the novel idea that Gentiles as well as Jews were partakers in the new faith. But of those accepting this revelation only a very few accepted it in its entirety: to most it appeared that Gentiles could become Christians only by first becoming Jews; that the rite of circumcision and the whole law of Moses was obligatory. Paul and his missionary colleague stoutly contested this idea; and at last a deputation went to Jerusalem to consult with the brethren there. In the famous gathering that met to consider this weighty matter Peter, through whom had been revealed the salvation of the Gentiles, pointed out that on the miraculous occasion of their first admission the signs of the Holy Ghost had been bestowed on Gentiles precisely as before on Jews, God making no difference. The apostles of the Gentiles followed with witness to the signs and wonders that had attended their work. Then James, representing the most venerable and purely Jewish tradition, illustrated how prophecy had contemplated the ingathering of the Gentiles, and himself proposed the great *eirenicon*, that the new converts should be asked to forego certain idolatrous customs specially shocking to their Jewish brethren. In a circular letter this *eirenicon* was sent abroad: thus conflict was changed into consolation, and in the most formal manner recognition was given to a non-circumcision Christianity.

It is usual to distinguish three missionary journeys of St. Paul. To me this seems misleading if offered as a principle of analysis for *The Book of Acts*. Stress is rightly laid on the first missionary journey, for this comes as a new institution in the extension of Christendom. But from this point onwards the particular itineraries of the apostle become of small importance; indeed, the so-called second and third journeys are found to mingle almost in the same sentence.[1] On the other hand, what comes into prominence as a landmark of the narrative is a new expansion of Christianity, its spread from Asia into Europe, from the region of the past to the region of future history. It is round this first preaching of the word in Europe that there gather the signs of providential guidance and supernatural vision.[2]

> They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.

We pass into a new phase of St. Paul's career, which, though interrupted by other journeyings, has its main character given to it by great cities of Europe, or the European coast of Asia. We read of the Roman colony of Philippi, with its incident of imprisonment and midnight earthquake, where Paul claims his right as a Roman citizen. Thessalonica, Berœa, have their scenes of preaching and of persecution from Jewish opponents. At Athens Paul confronts the intellectual aristocracy of the world; at Corinth he is in one of its commercial capitals; in Ephesus he encounters the magnificent Diana worship. Paul's mode of life becomes somewhat more stable: terms measured by years are given as periods of stay in a place; at Corinth he enters into partnership with a tent-maker, elsewhere he gives daily lectures for a space of two years. It is by vision that Paul (at Corinth[1]) is led to contemplate a protracted stay: this leads us to the expectation that the change in his habits is to reflect a change in his mission. And this is found to be the case. A point has been reached at which the development of Christianity is to consist, not so much in enrolment of new churches, but in building up those that already stand; not in the simple work of evangelisation, but in ecclesiastical statesmanship and the philosophy of Christian life. Accordingly, it is in connection with his work in the great cities that we find the first group of Paul's pastoral epistles.

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[1] *Acts* xviii. 23: "And having spent some time there [*at Antioch*] he departed:" this is all that separates the two.

[2] *Acts* xvi. 6.

3

To the Missionary Journey is thus added another institution of early Christianity — the Missionary Epistle. The apostles were in some sort successors of the prophets: these, however, had ministered to a single people within a limited area, whereas the teachers of the New Testament had to deal with scattered churches, with whom the epistle was the natural mode of intercourse. The Missionary Journey and the Missionary Epistle together made the very life blood of early Christendom:

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[1] *Acts* xviii. 9.

a circulating medium by which the thoughts of each fragment were conveyed to the whole, the influence of those who led was brought home to their remotest followers. Though written in free style, the pastoral epistles show a common structure. Over and above the formal greeting at the commencement, and personal messages at the close, an epistle has three distinct parts. There is a Recognition of the mutual relations between the writer and the people addressed; this may descend to particulars of personal movements, or rise to heights of Christian meditation and prayer. At the end there is Exhortation: this may spring directly out of the matter of the epistle, or it may be as general as the disconnected sentences of a book of wisdom. Between the Recognition and the Exhortation comes the Doctrinal Discussion. While the other portions of an epistle have a valuable bearing upon the personality and movements of the apostles, it is the doctrinal part that is important in the history of Christianity. For a pastoral epistle is called forth by an emergency: in its doctrinal discussion the apostle is bringing to bear upon this emergency the expanding thought of the new religion. Thus the succession of pastoral epistles traces the history of Christianity in a series of urgent questions.

In *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* we have a glimpse of a passing phase of early Christianity, when all other questions sank into the background in comparison with the expectation of an immediate coming of Christ. Like the Israelites prepared for their exodus, the Christian churches were standing with their loins girded: it is this expectancy of a sudden manifestation that explains the community of goods among the early converts, as if property had now no use save to minister to daily necessities of the brethren until the end should come. The first shock to this attitude of expectancy came, for the Thessalonian churches, in the death of some of their number. Did this mean that their loved brethren had fallen out of the Christian hope, and were but as they who die in the world? Or was there mistake as to the season of the Lord's coming? St. Paul in his first epistle appeals to the resurrection of Jesus, and bids his brethren believe that their dead shall be at no disadvantage — nay, that the dead in Christ will be the first to arise. As to times and seasons, they know that the day of the Lord must come as a thief in the night, yet without terror to those who are children of the light. But before the second epistle was written it would seem as if this ripple of disturbance in Thessalonica had become a theological revolution: factious teachers — apparently using Paul's name — had introduced the idea that there was to be no "coming of the Lord" except such as had already come. This Paul combats, with arguments that are difficult for us to follow, inasmuch as they are references to his verbal teaching while in Thessalonica. The main thought is that the signs precedent of Christ's coming were not yet appearing, — the "falling away" and "revelation of the man of sin." Meanwhile, appeal is made for order in the Church, as against the work of idle busybodies; and, to prevent repetition of the abuse of his name, Paul adds an autograph signature, which will be a token in future epistles.

The Epistle to the Galatians in its hurried opening reflects the spirit in which it is written; what I have called the recognition here merges in the doctrinal discussion — a cry that the Galatians are marvellously falling away from the doctrine which Paul had taught them to quite another gospel. The trouble here is that which, more than anything else, it was the lifework of Paul to combat: the idea that the gospel of Christ must be understood to include the law of Moses, all of which was incumbent on the Gentile converts. In this epistle Paul first, in the most solemn manner conceivable, asserts that his gospel was given him direct from the risen Master himself; he goes through his personal history to show that, not only had he not been influenced from other sources, but more, the reputed "pillars of the Church" had recognised him as intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, just as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision. He then makes passionate appeals to the Gentiles from their own experience, their conversion by faith, not by law; from their personal devotion to himself; nay, from their bond with Christ, seeing that receiving circumcision, he declares, is severance from Christ. All through these appeals the writer is keeping up a running fight with supposed defenders of Judaising Christianity. Paul is urging the Galatians to go right past the Law to the original faith of Abraham. The Law was no more than an interim institution, arising out of the existence of transgression, obtaining only to the time of the promised Messiah; Law was the prison from which faith is the release; Law was the attendant leading the child to the teacher, Christ. At the close is an appeal for caution in realising this truth: the Christian's calling is for freedom, but freedom not used as an occasion for the flesh.

In *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* we have a pastoral epistle on the most extensive scale; what with appeals formally made to the apostle, and information he had otherwise received about the church at Corinth, Paul has accumulated a large number of matters calling for discussion. We may divide the various questions into three classes.[1] First, it would appear that a spirit of worldliness had invaded the Corinthian church. This manifests itself partly in the factions under which, like schools of philosophy, the Corinthians were arraying themselves; whereas all spiritual leaders were but stewards who serve the church in spiritual mysteries. Again, it is complained that disputes between members of the church are carried to jurisdictions outside; that a case of gross immorality in a member is passed over with toleration. More difficult questions are raised as to relations between the church and the world without. There is the complex matter of marriage relationships. This Paul treats in the broad spirit of distinction between law and expediency — expediency in the highest sense: the question is not what a man may lawfully do, but what it is good for him to yield for the interests of the church. In the same spirit is treated that curious perplexity of early Christian life, the fact that the very food purchased might have been consecrated in idol worship; Paul points out that, in the field of pure knowledge, the nullity of idols makes this consecration null and void, yet Christian expediency may require that the weak should not be shocked, nor should association with anything idolatrous be lightly regarded. St. Paul passes in the second place to points of order: to lesser points, and especially to the disorder caused by the very exuberance of spiritual gifts among the Corinthians, producing competition and clashing. It is here that he develops his great idea of the church as an organism: as different members of the body have different degrees of honour, yet all unite in the common health, so the common LOVE is beyond any spiritual gifts; yet of these, he goes on to say, the test is edification of the church and good order. In the third place, Paul has to deal with what is even more fundamental. The doctrine of the resurrection has itself been denied. Paul makes the resurrection of Jesus the foundation upon which the whole Christian faith rests; this risen Jesus is a second Adam, firstfruits of resurrection for all, as the first Adam of the life that ends in death. From the analogy of seed corn rising in a changed form is developed the thought of a natural and a spiritual body; for all — those who have died and those who live — corruption will put on incorruption: so will death be swallowed up in victory.

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[1] From this point of view the divisions of the epistle would be Chapters i. 6–x; xi–xiv; xv.

By the time that *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* was written the Judaising controversy had infected that church as well as others. This, however, we learn only by inference from expressions of the apostle; the immediate topic of the epistle is still more general and fundamental, for the great apostle of the Gentiles has to fight for his pastoral authority against rivals, who have depreciated him in order to exalt themselves and their doctrines. The distaste which every high-minded man feels for self-assertion in any form gives colour to the whole letter. The very structure is affected, so that the doctrinal discussion appears in two places. In the first part of the epistle, where St. Paul is reviewing his movements, he has said how his life is a blessed march in the triumphal procession of Christ; the dominant thought of the whole epistle causes him to break off suddenly with the question, Is this self-commendation? This leads to a lengthy digression, in which Paul distinguishes between glorying in himself and glorying in his mission. If the ministry of Moses caused his face to shine, what may be expected of that which is itself a ministry of light? Truly the treasure of light is in earthen vessels, and the preachers of life are being daily delivered to death; but they look from the temporary dissolving tabernacle to the permanent building in the heavens. When, later on, the natural place is reached for doctrinal discussion,[1] Paul makes appeal that the Corinthians shall recognise his authority, and so save him from having to exercise it when he comes. With many apologies and manifest reluctance he recites his claims as a Hebrew of the Hebrews,—claims based upon persecutions and upon wonderful revelations, claims finally based upon the ministry to the Corinthians themselves, who were served as a church inferior to no church, unless it be inferiority that they were served without charge. Thus the apostle hopes to use authority, when he comes, to build up and not to cast down.

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We pass to the fourth and final section of the apostolic history. For the first section the centre of interest was Jerusalem; for the second Antioch; for the third the large cities; the centre of interest is henceforward transferred to Rome. While still at Ephesus Paul formed a plan to make a tour of his European churches, then to visit Jerusalem, and finally Rome. As a first instalment of this plan he writes *The Epistle to the Romans.* This must be distinguished from the pastoral epistles as being rather an epistolary treatise.[1] It has the epistolary superscription, and a long list of greetings to persons Paul had met on his travels, and who have since settled in the metropolitan city. But it is not addressed to any church; it is intended for general circulation among "all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," preparatory to a visit in which the apostle hopes to do for those in Rome what he has done elsewhere. Thus he makes his letter a treatise in which he formally expounds that aspect of Christianity of which he is the recognised representative. Perhaps no work ever written has a better title to be called world-literature than this *Epistle to the Romans:* an exposition of the Christian gospel, specially designed to harmonise the thoughts of Hebrews and Greeks, and addressed to the Rome that had become the mistress of both.

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[1] Chapter x. 1.

The theme may be thus formulated: The gospel the power of God; to Jew and Greek alike; as revealing a righteousness that is by faith. Its exposition keeps two lines of thought side by side. One displays the righteousness that is by faith. It advances by regular steps: a whole world (of Gentile and Jew alike) brought under the judgment of God; a righteousness manifested — apart from law, yet witnessed to by law and prophets

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[1] To the same literary classification may be referred the brilliant *Epistle to Hebrews*, addressed through a particular church to Hebrews in general. Its purport is that the Law must give place to the Gospel as to a higher and fuller dispensation.

— through faith in Jesus to all without distinction; on this foundation of justification by faith a life of salvation, by grace abounding more than sin has abounded; as a climax, sonship of God, co-heirship with Christ, all things working together for the believer's glorification. But, for a second line of thought, side by side with this continually advancing argument St. Paul, in his own special manner, keeps up a running fight of answers to imaginary objections, all designed to conciliate those trained in ideas of the exclusiveness of the Law. This part of the treatise reaches its climax in the contention that God's ancient people have not been cast off; they are temporarily hardened that the Gentiles may be grafted in; if then their fall is the riches of the world, what will their fulness be! Like the pastoral epistles, the treatise concludes with solemn words of exhortation.

As St. Paul proceeds with the plan he had formed, he finds himself more and more entangled in the strange ways of providence. Everywhere prophetic signs are given him of trouble and bondage awaiting him; his meetings with the churches become a series of sorrowful farewells. In Jerusalem an act of legal ritual, specially designed to conciliate, is misinterpreted, and in the popular tumult that follows Paul is arrested. He is hurried from adventure to adventure, from tribunal to tribunal; he makes defence before the mob of Jerusalem, before the council, before Roman governors and King Agrippa. Soon after his arrest a vision encourages him with the word that he is destined to bear witness at Rome. So after a long period of waiting, and many perils, the course of providence fulfils Paul's own purpose in a way he had never expected, and brings him a state prisoner to Rome. The narrative of *The Acts* closes with Paul continuing to bear his witness for Christ as a prisoner at large: the apostle of the Gentiles proclaiming the gospel of the uncircumcision in the metropolis of the Gentile nations.

Under this imprisonment in Rome Paul issued an epistolary manifesto to the Gentile churches: a circular letter, varied perhaps in a few details for particular churches, of which a single copy has come down to us —*The Epistle to the Ephesians*. Distinct from the pastoral epistles, which are concerned with the government of the churches, the manifesto is rather an act of faith: not a discussion of details, but a reassertion of the Christian hope in all its fulness, coloured in its form by the particular circumstances which have called it forth. Paul writes on the present occasion as the prisoner of Christ Jesus in the cause of the Gentiles: his sufferings must be looked upon as the Gentiles' glory; his anxiety is to emphasise his particular stewardship in the mystery of redemption, how that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs in the promise through Christ. And similarly, when he is expatiating upon the blessedness of Christ's religion, he makes prominent this blessedness above all, that those who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel have become fellows in the house and temple of which Christ is the chief corner stone, Christ Jesus having broken down the middle wall of partition, and abolished the legal ordinances which were the principle of antagonism. Appeal is made to walk worthy of such a calling, keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

In this connection may be read *The Epistle to the Colossians*. It differs from the circular letter of which

Ephesians is the type, owing to the special circumstances of the body of Christians to whom it is addressed. The gospel of Christ, as Paul understood it, had been undermined for the Colossians by a rival system of faith. On its speculative side this rival system is reflected in a word which in the epistle seems to be used as a technical term — the word 'fulness.' Meditation on the awful distance between God and man had led thinkers to 'fill in' this interval with the idea of a chain of angelic emanations. Paul insists that in Christ all the 'fulness' of the Father dwells: he is the image of God, firstborn of all creation, and agency through whom all principalities and dominions have been created. The practical side of the heresy was insistence upon ordinances and ascetic vows: from these Paul recalls the Colossians to Christ as all in all.

> If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances — Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using) — after the precepts and doctrines of men? . . . Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Five more letters stand in the name of Paul: epistles to *Philemon* and the *Philippians*, two epistles to *Timothy*, and one to *Titus*. The early church was not a system of social revolution, but an *imperium in imperio*: in the world of its age without being of it. Hence *The Epistle to Philemon* shows us Paul using his influence — with infinite grace and tact — to restore a runaway slave to his master, while he bids this Christian master receive the slave as a brother. *Philippians* gives the appeal of the apostle to a body of Christians specially devoted to him. In the other three letters we have a pioneer in ecclesiastical organisation advising his younger associates. Speaking from the literary side it is interesting to note how in some of these epistles the literary quotations, instead of being taken from the Old Testament, seem to reflect the rise of a distinctively Christian hymnology.

> He who was manifested in the flesh,
> Justified in the spirit,
> Seen of angels,
> Preached among the nations,
> Believed on in the world,
> Received up in glory.[1]

And again, —

> For if we died with him,
> We shall also live with him;
> If we endure,
> We shall also reign with him;
> If we shall deny him,
> He also will deny us;
> If we are faithless,
> He abideth faithful,
> For he cannot deny himself.[2]

These five epistles are full of interest in reflecting the routine of early Church history and work. They do not however lead us to any landmark in the expansion of the New Testament Church.

Three more letters, connected with the names of St. Peter and St. Jude, may be classed with what I have called the epistolary manifesto. They do not present an apostle in his intercourse with a particular church, nor do they discuss details of ecclesiastical organisation.

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[1] *I Timothy* iii. 16.

[2] *II Timothy* ii. 11.

They are passionate reassertions of the fundamental Christian faith, in the face of emergencies, but emergencies which are general and wide-reaching in their character. Persecution belongs to all the history of the early church; but the exigency which has called forth *The First Epistle of St. Peter* is an overpowering outburst of persecution, a "fiery trial" which has shaken the churches to their foundations. Against this background St. Peter recites the living hope restored through the resurrection of Jesus to the faithful, while they are being guarded to their final salvation; he exhorts to the attitude of pilgrims and strangers in the persecuting world, to sobriety, holiness, love, patience; suffering must not be thought a strange thing for those who are called to be partakers of the sufferings of Christ. The other two epistles represent a phase of Church history in which the new religion has tc struggle, not with speculative heresies, but with a deep-seated corruption, an antinomianism that is turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. The corrupters are false prophets —

> — creatures without reason, born mere animals, to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant . . . men that count it pleasure to revel in the daytime, spots and blemishes, revelling in their love-feasts while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unstedfast souls . . . uttering great swelling words of vanity they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error; promising them liberty, while they themselves are bond-servants of corruption.

Against corruption of this type the epistles contend for "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." There is further one note in common through all three letters: the sense of immediateness with which the coming of Christ is expected. St. Peter insists that the end of all things is at hand; the fiery trial is interpreted to mean that judgment is beginning at the house of God. The epistles that attack antinomianism recognise the corrupting prophets as the mockers foretold for "the last days," who say, "Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But, it is insisted, the day of the Lord will come as a thief; the faithful are exhorted to build themselves up on their most holy faith, looking for the mercy of Christ unto eternal life.

We have thus briefly reviewed The History of the New Testament Church as Presented by Itself. So long as the Master remained upon earth, whether moving about his own Galilee, or steadfastly journeying to Jerusalem, or contending with the rulers of society in the sacred capital, the circle around his bodily presence represented the visible church. To this circle his last words promised his presence, while it imposed the duty of proclaiming the glad tidings to all nations. From the miraculous signal of Pentecost the work was begun. At first around the apostles was gathered a simple fellowship for prayer and mutual comfort. Soon fresh miraculous signals opened up undreamed-of extension: the 'new way' among the Jews must enlarge itself to admit Gentiles; Europe clamoured for help from Asia. We see the missionary journey instituted to meet the growing expansion, building up a church out of churches; the missionary epistle appears as a medium in which may be traced the expanding thought. For a time we have a band of converts careless as to things earthly, concerned only about the speedy coming of Christ. They are recalled to earth by the struggle between the two elements within their fellowship; from a tender toleration of Gentile brethren, who shrink from the full rigour of Mosaic law, we see gradually developed the conception of a righteousness by faith to which the dispensation of law was but a preparatory stage. Persecution from without, struggle and rivalry within, are seen as forces under the stress of which are gradually worked out principles of Christian truth and order. Three epistles (whatever their chronological dates may be) show us once more a church excited with the sense that the end of all things is at hand, and asserting the original faith against fiery persecution and paralysing corruption. At this point — with evangelisation carried to the Roman centre of the world, with the evangel itself developed into a theology and an ecclesiastical system — the history of Christianity passes out of canonical into secular literature.

Part Second

BIBLICAL POETRY AND PROSE

IV. Poetry and Prose in the Bible
V. Old Testament Wisdom
VI. New Testament Wisdom
VII. Lyric Poetry of the Bible
VIII. Prophecy as a Branch of Literature
IX. Old Testament Prophecy
X. New Testament Prophecy

CHAPTER IV

POETRY AND PROSE IN THE BIBLE

We have reached a point at which it becomes necessary to form clear ideas as to certain literary terms, which are among the commonest words in our language, in reference to which, nevertheless, great confusion of thought prevails. I refer more particularly to the words 'poetry' and 'prose.' It is not difficult to see how the confusion has come about. The fluctuations of language have obliged the word 'prose' to do double duty: there is the prose which contrasts with poetry, and there is the prose which contrasts with verse. It is thus not unnatural that to many minds poetry and verse should suggest much the same thing. In reality, however, the terms 'poetry' and 'prose' convey the most fundamental of all distinctions in literary form; the terms 'prose' and 'verse' relate only to a difference of style that lies on the surface of literature.

For the meaning of the word 'poetry' etymology comes to our aid. 'Poet' is the Greek for 'maker'; and in Old English 'makers' was the regular name for poets. From the Latin come two more similar terms: 'creative' literature and 'fiction.' All four words imply the same idea: the poet, the maker, the author of creative literature or fiction, is one who *makes*, who creates something, who adds to the sum of existences. Shakespeare and Sophocles are poets in virtue of their having created a Hamlet, an Œdipus. It does not follow that in actual history a similar Hamlet and Œdipus may not have existed. But the imaginative faculties to which poetry appeals have a wider range than that limited by past history; whether therefore it conceives entirely new persons and incidents, or whether it works up existing persons and incidents in a way that makes an independent appeal to our minds, in both cases poetry may be said to create. The poet is thus man's nearest approach to the Divine Maker and Creator of the universe; and this is perhaps St. Paul's thought when he says to the Ephesians, "We are God's — workmanship": so the English version has it; but the original Greek says, "We are God's *poem*." The medium in which the poet's conception is expressed is of secondary importance. Large parts of Shakespeare's plays — as a glance at the text will show — are in prose; yet obviously Shakespeare is as much a poet in his prose scenes as in the scenes which are written in verse. If it be true that we commonly describe by the term 'fiction' the creative literature which is expressed in prose, this is merely a matter of usage, and involves no difference of meaning.

In contradistinction to such creative poetry 'prose literature' is limited by matter of fact and actual existence. The historian, the philosopher, the orator, depart from their proper function if they allow imaginary matter to mingle in their discussion with matter of fact; the singer, the author of drama and epic, are poets just in proportion as they rise above the limitations of fact. To truth poetry and prose alike own allegiance; prose reaches truth by discussion, poetry by illustration. The philosopher argues what goodness is, the dramatist creates a good man: both are helping us to be good.

The application of this distinction to biblical literature is of great importance. It is common to speak of Isaiah as a great poet; but many persons — commentators as well as readers — seem to understand this to mean merely that Isaiah has given us sermons in verse, adorned no doubt with abundance of poetic imagery and diction. But poetic imagery and diction may be used in oratory, and the distinction between verse and oratorical flow of sentences is a comparatively small matter. As a fact, *The Book of Isaiah*, and other portions of Scripture, include poetry in the fullest sense of the term: imaginative scenes used as a vehicle to convey truth. He who framed the parable of the Prodigal Son was not limited in his details to what happened to have actually occurred. For the dramatic parable of *Job*, just as for Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, there was no doubt a basis of historic fact; but neither the play nor *The Book of Job* is in any way limited by that historic germ. *Solomon's Song* is just as much a piece of creative literature as *Romeo and Juliet*. In *The Book of Joel* prophetic truth is conveyed by means of imaginary scenes — pictures of a whole people with its varied classes of men united in panic-stricken lamentation, of a mysterious catastrophe advancing in rapid stages, of sudden relief, happy restoration, progress to a final judgment for all nations — precisely in the same way as in Milton imaginary scenes of Heaven, Hell, and Eden are used in justifying the ways of God to men. Whether the visions of Zechariah came into the prophet's mind in just the same way as other visions came into the mind of the poet Dante is a question for theologians: but in both cases alike the visions stand as creative pictures from which truth is to be interpreted. The reader, then, who would understand the books of Isaiah and other prophets must be prepared to find, not only sermons in verse, but also the poetry of imagination and symbolic drama.

Coming to the distinction between 'prose' and 'verse,' we may note a difference between the verse system of Hebrew and other languages with which the reader may be familiar. In English, or French, or German, verse is made by the number of syllables in a line, or by rhyme. In Latin and Greek the verse depends upon what is called the 'quantity' of particular syllables. The Old English verse was constituted by 'alliteration' — the recurrence in a line of similar sounds: —

In a *s*omer *s*eson whan *s*oft wa*s* the *s*onne,
I *sh*ope me in *sh*roudes as I a *sh*epe were.

In Hebrew the foundation of verse is a recurrence, not of sounds, but of parallel clauses: —

The LORD of hosts is with us:
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth:
He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariots in the fire.

Each of these is a 'verse,' not in virtue of any number of syllables, but because the ear catches — what the sense confirms — that we have, in the first case two, in the second case three clauses, which run parallel with one another.

How entirely dependent biblical verse is upon parallelism of clauses may be tested by a simple experiment. Let the reader open a Bible (Revised Version), say, at the twenty-third chapter of *The Book of Numbers:* his eye will catch certain passages which stand out as verse amid a general course of prose. Let him commence at verse eight, and read on, omitting every alternate line: what he reads will make complete sense, and will be good prose.

> How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? For from the top of the rocks I see him: lo, it is a people that dwell alone. Who can count the dust of Jacob? Let me die the death of the righteous!

Let him read a second time, putting in the lines omitted: the prose will have risen into verse.

> How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?
>   And how shall I defy whom the LORD hath not defied?
> For from the top of the rocks I see him,
>   And from the hills I behold him:
> Lo, it is a people that dwell alone,
>   And shall not be reckoned among the nations.
> Who can count the dust of Jacob,
>   Or number the fourth part of Israel?
> Let me die the death of the righteous,
>   And let my last end be like his!

It is easy to see how, when each clause is supported by a second clause saying the same thing in different words, the sense of the whole sentence is kept suspended, so to speak, with a poise of thought, which differs from straightforward prose as the step of a dance differs from the step of a walk.

A verse system that rests upon parallelism of clauses is capable of just the same elaborations that prevail in other systems of verse. Figures of parallelism are found that are counterparts to the 'stanzas' of our hymn books. Sometimes a biblical hymn is made up of very simple stanzas.

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
Serve the LORD with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the LORD he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and we are his;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.

For the LORD is good;
His mercy endureth for ever;
And his faithfulness unto all generations.

Sometimes the stanzas are very elaborate, as in the opening of *Ecclesiasticus*.

All wisdom cometh from the Lord,
And is with him for ever.
        The sand of the seas,
      And the drops of rain;
    And the days of eternity, who shall number?
        The height of the heaven,
      And the breadth of the earth, and the deep,
    And wisdom, who shall search them out?
Wisdom hath been created before all things,
And the understanding of prudence from everlasting.

To whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed?
And who hath known her shrewd counsels?
        There is one wise,
      Greatly to be feared,
    The Lord sitting upon his throne:
        He created her,

And saw and numbered her,
And poured her out upon all his works.
She is with all flesh according to his gift;
And he gave her freely to them that love him.

Biblical verse, like the verse of other great literatures, produces effects of beauty by rhythmic changes, or by recurrence of clauses in 'refrains,' or by other musical devices.

They wandered in the wilderness in a desert way;
They found no city of habitation:
Hungry and thirsty,
Their soul fainted in them.
Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble,
And he delivered them out of their distresses.
He led them also by a straight way,
That they might go to a city of habitation.
OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
For he satisfieth the longing soul,
And the hungry soul he filleth with good.

Such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Being bound in affliction and iron;
Because they rebelled against the words of God,
And contemned the counsel of the Most High:
Therefore he brought down their heart with labour:
They fell down, and there was none to help.
Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble,
And he saved them out of their distresses.
He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
And brake their bonds in sunder.
OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
For he hath broken the gates of brass,
And cut the bars of iron in sunder.

Later in the same (hundred and seventh) psalm we have illustrated a rhythmic effect almost peculiar to biblical verse: the 'pendulum figure,' in which the thought sways between one and the other of two ideas — in this case between judgment and mercy — like the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* of music.

He turneth rivers into a wilderness,
And watersprings into a thirsty ground,
A fruitful land into a salt desert,
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

He turneth a wilderness into a pool of water,
And a dry land into watersprings,
And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,
That they may prepare a city of habitation;
And sow fields, and plant vineyards,
And get them fruits of increase.
He blesseth them also so that they are multiplied greatly;
And he suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

Again they are minished and bowed down,
Through oppression, trouble, and sorrow,
He poureth contempt upon princes,
And causeth them to wander in the waste, where there is no way.

Yet setteth he the needy on high from affliction,
And maketh him families like a flock.
The upright shall see it, and be glad;
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

But I do not propose in this work to go farther into the niceties of biblical verse. For those who are interested in literary technicalities I have discussed the subject elsewhere.[1] For the more general reader the essential thing is that the verse structure should be represented to the eye by proper printing of the text. Where this is done, further explanation is superfluous; where structural arrangement is wanting, no amount of explanation is likely to be of much avail.

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[1] In my *Literary Study of the Bible* [2d edition], Appendix III.

CHAPTER V

OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM

We now approach an interesting branch of sacred literature which is known by the name of 'wisdom.' It corresponds to the philosophy of other literatures. But there is a reason for the difference of name. Philosophy, in its simplest sense, is meditation on things in general, as distinct from history which describes things or events, and oratory which appeals to a particular audience. But in the philosophy of the Greeks, and the modern philosophies which succeeded to it, the meditation soon became a craving for explanation of things around us: the attempted explanation broadened and broadened, until philosophy came to mean the reduction of all things to a unity or single scheme. Sacred philosophy has a great deal in common with this; but throughout its whole course its thinkers made prominent, what elsewhere belonged only to an early stage of philosophy, the idea of meditation with a direct view to right conduct. Hence the name 'wisdom.'

Every reader will feel that there is a difference of spirit between wisdom literature and other parts of the Bible. The prophets give out what they say as a direct Divine message: "Thus saith the Lord." The books of the law contain what "the Lord said unto Moses." Bible history is an account of God's dealing with the nation of his choice. Sacred poetry is largely associated with actual worship of God. The wise men, on the other hand, only profess to be giving us the result of their own meditation on human life: they have been called, to distinguish them from other sacred writers, 'humanists.' To say this, of course, is not to deny that wisdom literature is part of the 'Divine revelation' which the churches recognise as contained in the Bible; all that is implied is that in their literary form the sayings of the wise contain no such claim to immediate Divine authority. The speakers are simply observers of life and the world: and the word 'OBSERVATION' furnishes a keynote for the whole study of wisdom literature.

This idea of 'observation' gives us at once a basis upon which to arrange the different books of wisdom with a view to connected study. What I have in mind is not the chronological order in which the books were produced: that is a separate question, and belongs to the history of Hebrew literature. But the productions of the wise men may be arranged in a literary sequence, which is highly suggestive and important. It turns upon a distinction between two different kinds of wisdom, according as the observation which wisdom implies is directed upon the parts, or the whole, of life and the external universe. The two may be called the lower and the higher wisdom. Or, they may be distinguished as *wisdom* and *Wisdom:* the capital letter indicates how the biblical thinkers, when they contemplate the universe as a whole, fall into the poetical form of personification, and indeed often express their sense of the harmony reigning through all things by the use of a personal pronoun: —

> To the light of day succeedeth night, but against Wisdom evil doth not prevail, but she reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength, and ordereth all things graciously.[1]

First, we have wisdom literature in its stage of calm. Here observation, properly so called, is directed solely to the details of life, and we get disconnected sayings on human conduct and experience. When, at this stage, the wise turn their thoughts to life and the universe as a whole, observation gives place to adoration of the Wisdom that reigns through all things. Thus miscellanies of wisdom in the lower sense of the term, combined with hymns of adoration to supreme Wisdom, make up this first type of philosophy. It includes the biblical *Proverbs* and apocryphal *Ecclesiasticus*.

The book entitled *Ecclesiastes* marks the point where at last observation and analysis are turned upon life and the external universe as a whole. But this attempt of philosophy to read the meaning of all things breaks down in failure and despair: the term 'Wisdom' disappears from this book, and in its place we have reiterated the word 'Vanity,' to express how existence is found 'empty' of all meaning. This however does not prevent the book from being full of wisdom in the other sense of the word; it is a storehouse of miscellaneous reflections on details of life and conduct.

Beyond this stage philosophy finds a later triumph when the universe to be observed is enlarged by the idea of a world beyond the grave. With this change of view the 'Wisdom' reigning through all things reappears; from despair we return to the tone of adoration, and the closest observation and analysis reveals in all things an ordered scheme of providence. This stage is represented by the (apocryphal) work which has for title, *The Wisdom of Solomon.*

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[1] *Wisdom* viii. 1.

So far all the works mentioned belong to the literature of contemplation, in which the thinker seems to stand apart from life, and consider it from outside. In *The Book of Job* we are confronted with an actual crisis of real experience, and various speakers placed in the midst of it seek to interpret the meaning of this crisis while it is still happening. Thus different attitudes of mind toward supreme questions of Wisdom are here represented in the different personages of a drama, and drawn together by a dramatic plot. *The Book of Job* is Wisdom Dramatised: this crowning work of Old Testament philosophy serves also to present the other philosophical books in their mutual relations.

I propose to review these works in the literary sequence in which we have thus seen them placed. It may be convenient however, at this point, to indicate to the reader, in the briefest manner, the various literary forms in which he will find biblical wisdom expressing itself.

There is first the familiar Proverb: a couplet or triplet of parallel verse.

> He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker:
> But he that hath mercy on the needy honoureth Him.
>
> As one that taketh off a garment in cold weather,
> And as vinegar upon nitre,
> So is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.

The Proverb enlarges into the verse Epigram: the two lines of the couplet text are supported by other lines explaining or enforcing.

Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide thine heart in the way.
Be not among winebibbers;
Among gluttonous eaters of flesh:
For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty;
And drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.[1]

It is plain that the real text of this epigram is found in the last couplet, up to which the rest is leading.

The most extended of the verse forms found in wisdom literature is that which may be called the Sonnet. The proper meaning of this term is a form of poetry in which, so to speak, the thought is poured into a given mould of verse. In the most familiar modern literature only one such mould of verse is used for the sonnet; namely, a series of fourteen lines, arranged in a particular order. But biblical sonnets fall into a great variety of moulds, the only thing common to them all being a highly elaborate parallelism of lines. For example, I may point out how the thought which was the text of the epigram quoted above reappears in another poem as part of a sonnet.

THE FIELD OF THE SLOTHFUL[2]

I went by the field of the slothful,
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;
And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
The face thereof was covered with nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
Then I beheld,
And considered well:

I saw,
And received instruction.
"Yet a little sleep,

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[1] *Proverbs* xxiii. 19-21.

[2] *Proverbs* xxiv. 30.

A little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep" —
So shall thy poverty come as a robber,
And thy want as an armed man.

The eye catches from the printed page the symmetry between the different parts of such a sonnet; and the sense will be found to harmonise with the symmetry of the form. This is one of the shortest of wisdom sonnets: many of the poems so named are of great length and elaborateness.

There remain two more forms of wisdom literature. What the Epigram is in verse, the Maxim is in prose: a proverb (or proverb abbreviated) makes a text for a brief comment in prose.

A merchant shall hardly keep himself from wrong-doing;
And a huckster shall not be acquitted of sin.

> Many have sinned for a thing indifferent; and he that seeketh to multiply gain will turn his eye away. A nail will stick fast between the joinings of stones; and sin will force itself in between buying and selling.[1]

Perhaps the most important of all the literary forms into which scriptural philosophy falls is the Essay. *Ecclesiasticus* is a great storehouse of essay literature. The wisdom essays are not the lengthy discussions called by that name in the more modern literature, but are closely analogous to the essays of Bacon and his school. They consist of a collection of pithy thoughts: disconnected, except that they all bear upon a single topic, which becomes the *title* of the essay. With an illustration of the shorter essays in *Ecclesiasticus* I will conclude this review of the principal forms of wisdom literature.

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[1] *Ecclesiasticus* xxvi. 29.

FRIENDSHIP[1]

Sweet words will multiply a man's friends, and a fair-speaking tongue will multiply courtesies. Let those that are at peace with thee be many; but thy counsellors one of a thousand. If thou wouldest get thee a friend, get him by proving, and be not in haste to trust him. For there is a friend that is so for his own occasion, and he will not continue in the day of thy affliction. And there is a friend that turneth to enmity, and he will discover strife to thy reproach. And there is a friend that is a companion at the table, and he will not continue in the day of thy affliction: and in thy prosperity he will be as thyself, and will be bold over thy servants; if thou shalt be brought low, he will be against thee, and will hide himself from thy face. Separate thyself from thine enemies; and beware of thy friends. A faithful friend is a strong defence; and he that hath found him hath found a treasure. There is nothing that can be taken in exchange for a faithful friend; and his excellency is beyond price. A faithful friend is a medicine of life; and they that fear the Lord shall find him. He that feareth the Lord directeth his friendship aright; for as he is, so is his neighbour also.

Sacred Wisdom in its Stage of Philosophic Calm. Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus

The portion of wisdom literature first to be considered is *The Book of Proverbs* in the Bible, together with *Ecclesiasticus* in the Apocrypha. Both are miscellanies: there is no continuous discussion, but a succession of disconnected meditations, in the brief forms of proverbs, epigrams, maxims, or the longer sonnets and essays. *The Book of Proverbs*, when properly divided, is seen to be five separate collections, put together by an unknown editor.[1] The first contains sonnets in celebration of wisdom; the second has for title, "The Proverbs of Solomon"; next comes what reads as an epistle of wisdom, sent by the hands of a messenger to friends who have asked contributions; the fourth section is entitled "Proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah copied out"; the last contains sayings of Agur and of Lemuel's mother. The other work is a much larger collection, but it is the compilation of a single editor. The name in the original is, "The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach"; the name *Ecclesiasticus* has been given to the book by theologians, to indicate that it is a book 'for reading in churches,' as distinguished from the 'canonical' books, which alone are to be used as foundation for theological doctrine.

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[1] *Ecclesiasticus* vi. 5.

The contents of both these works are pervaded by a spirit of philosophic calm. Nor is the reason of this difficult to discover. The wise men, as they are here represented, have not essayed the difficult task of reading an interpretation into existence as a whole. They show keen observation and analysis: but their observation is directed solely upon the details of life and the varieties of human society. When they raise their thoughts to the sum of things, they feel this is no topic for analysis, but only meditate with reverent rapture upon the perfection that reigns through the universe.

To speak first of the lower wisdom that belongs to life in its details. The shorter sayings are often vivid picturings of particular types or aspects of social life: what Elizabethan writers would have called 'humours.' There is the practical joker: —

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[1] For detailed references, see *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiasticus*, in the Appendix.

As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death
　　So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour,
　　And saith, Am not I in sport?

The seductive influence of slander is caught: —

The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels,
And they go down into the innermost parts of the belly

The mendicant is presented by one proverb: —

All the brethren of the poor do hate him:
　　How much more do his friends go far from him!
　　He pursueth them with words, but they are gone.

Another catches the 'humour' of shopping: —

It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer:
But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

We have an epigram of the miserly host: —

Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye,
Neither desire thou his dainties;
For as one that reckoneth within himself, so is he:
　Eat and drink, saith he to thee;
　But his heart is not with thee.
The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up,
And lose thy sweet words.

A peculiar form of sonnet[1] brings out well the ways of a pair of lovers, so full of meaning to themselves, so unintelligible to all others: —

There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
Yea, four which I know not:
　　The way of an Eagle in the air;
　　The way of a Serpent upon a rock;
　　The way of a Ship in the midst of the sea;
And the way of a Man with a Maid.

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[1] Several of these 'Number Sonnets' are to be found in *Proverbs* xxx.

Of course the wise men heap scorn upon the sluggard: who buries his hand in the dish, too lazy to bring it to his mouth; who turns on his bed like a door on hinges; who is nevertheless wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason. But, naturally, the chief enemy of wisdom is 'the fool.'

Weep for the dead,
  For light hath failed him;
And weep for a fool,
  For understanding hath failed him:

Weep more sweetly for the dead,
  Because he hath found rest;
  But the life of the fool
Is worse than death.

Seven days are the days of mourning for the dead:
But for a fool and an ungodly man, all the days of his life.[1]

Conduct on all its many sides is a subject for the wise. Many proverbs inveigh against the dishonesty of the false balance; one finds an illustration for ill-gotten fortunes in the will-o'-the-wisp.

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue
  Is a vapour driven to and fro;
  They that seek them seek death.

Essays deal more at length with such topics as pride and meekness, true and false shame, choice of company, vengeance, sins of the flesh; especially, government of the tongue.

> Hast thou heard a word? let it die with thee: be of good courage; it will not burst thee. A fool will travail in pain with a word, as a woman in labour with a child. As an arrow that sticketh in the flesh of the thigh, so is a word in a fool's belly.

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[1] *Ecclesiasticus* xxii. 11.

The minutiæ of conduct, which we call behaviour, are not beneath the notice of the wise men.

> Sittest thou at a great table? be not greedy upon it . . . Stretch not thine hand whithersoever it looketh, and thrust not thyself with it into the dish. . . . Speak, thou that art the elder, for it becometh thee, but with sound knowledge. And hinder not music: pour not out talk when there is a performance of music, and display not thy wisdom out of season. . . . Speak, young man, if there be need of thee; yet scarcely if thou be twice asked: sum up thy speech, many things in few words; be as one that knoweth and yet holdeth his tongue.

Conduct as a topic of wisdom leads naturally to the subject of relations between rich and poor, master and servant, children and parents. Woman is variously treated. Many proverbs seek unpleasant comparisons for the contentious woman; on the other hand no language seems to the wise men too strong for extolling the good wife; and further, a wife is made almost a necessity for the life that would be wise.

> Where no hedge is, the possession will be laid waste: and he that hath no wife will mourn as he wandereth up and down. For who will trust a nimble robber, that skippeth from city to city? even so who shall trust a man that hath no nest, and lodgeth wheresoever he findeth himself at nightfall?

And, besides the activities of conduct, there is the passive side of life and experience, from which wisdom can draw its reflections: how hope deferred maketh the heart sick; how —

> The heart knoweth its own bitterness,
> And a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy.

We are approaching a step nearer to the Wisdom that contemplates the sum of things when we have sayings on the topic of the judgment between good and evil: not a distant event, but a daily controversy in which evil is bound to be overthrown.

> There shall no mischief happen to the righteous:
> But the wicked shall be filled with evil.

A righteous man, though he fall seven times, riseth up again, while the wicked are overthrown by calamity. It will be asked, How could the enlightened observation of the wise men fail to see the many contradictions to this principle which daily life presents? Such contradictions are, in *Proverbs*, dismissed as so many trials of faith.

> Fret not thyself because of evil-doers;
> Neither be thou envious at the wicked:
> For there will be no reward to the evil man;
> The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

The son of Sirach is no less firm in this faith; but his essays state the doctrine in a way to meet objections, pointing out how retribution may be delayed until the very day of the sinner's death, or even descend upon his posterity instead of himself.

> In the day of good things there is a forgetfulness of evil things; and in the day of evil things a man will not remember things that are good. For it is an easy thing in the sight of the Lord to reward a man in the day of death according to his ways. The affliction of an hour causeth forgetfulness of delight; and in the last end of a man is the revelation of his deeds. Call no man blessed before his death; and a man shall be known in his children.

We may now turn to the smaller but not less important portions of these two works, in which the wise men are meditating upon Wisdom as a whole. Here the calm of the philosophic observer becomes quickened into holy joy and fervent admiration.

Wisdom is the principal thing;
  Get wisdom:
Yea, with all thou hast gotten
  Get understanding.

The allurements of this Wisdom are celebrated in sonnets.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver,
And the gain thereof than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies:
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her.

Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honour.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her;
And happy is every one that retaineth her.

Essays dwell on the difficulty of securing so rich a prize.

> For at the first she will walk with him in crooked ways, and will bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline, until she may trust his soul, and try him by her judgements: then will she return again the straight way unto him, and will gladden him, and reveal to him her secrets.

But what is the Wisdom thus celebrated, and how much is implied in the conception of it? In the first place, Wisdom is a thing of character; not now features of conduct, but character as a whole.

For wisdom shall enter into thine heart,
And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul;
Discretion shall watch over thee;
Understanding shall keep thee.

Character expresses itself in action, and we have a "way of wisdom" that contrasts with its opposite.

> The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn
>   That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.
> The way of the wicked is as darkness:
>   They know not at what they stumble.

Not only how the good man walks in the world, but also how the world deals with him — this comes into the conception of Wisdom: it is the principle of providential retribution, and that not on the good alone, but also on the evil. It is Wisdom who is made to proclaim: —

>   Because I have called, and ye refused;
>   I have stretched out my hand,
>   And no man regarded;
>   But ye have set at nought all my counsel,
>   And would none of my reproof:
> I also will laugh in the day of your calamity;
> I will mock when your fear cometh;
> When your fear cometh as a storm,
> And your calamity cometh on as a whirlwind;
> When distress and anguish come upon you,
>   Then shall they call upon me,
> But I will not answer;
>   They shall seek me diligently,
> But they shall not find me.

But the conception of supreme Wisdom goes farther still: it includes not only the providence that rules over man, but also the providence of the external universe, which first brought it into being, and still maintains it in order and harmony.

> The LORD by wisdom founded the earth:
> By understanding he established the heavens.
> By his knowledge the depths were broken up,
> And the skies drop down the dew.

A universal Wisdom which thus includes the world within and the world without, which establishes a harmony extending from the conduct of men to the creative power of God: no wonder that this should be a theme of song and adoration, such as scarcely differs from the adoration paid to God himself, the author of Wisdom.

To fear the Lord
  Is the beginning of wisdom;
  And it was created together with the faithful in the womb.
  With men she laid an eternal foundation;
  And with their seed shall she be had in trust.

To fear the Lord
  Is the fulness of wisdom;
  And she satiateth men with her fruits.
  She shall fill all her house with desirable things,
  And her garners with her produce.

The fear of the Lord
  Is the crown of wisdom,
  Making peace and perfect health to flourish.
  He both saw and numbered her;
  He rained down skill and knowledge of understanding,
  And exalted the honour of them that hold her fast.

To fear the Lord
  Is the root of wisdom;
  And her branches are length of days.

In so perfect a universe what place is there for evil? We have already seen, in the sayings of the early wise men, the destined end of evil: but how about its first beginning? Very delicate and suggestive is the handling of this topic in the wisdom sonnets. As all good is personified under the name of Wisdom, so there is a shadowy personification of her opposite, that appears from time to time as the 'Strange Woman.' It must be remembered that in Bible English the word had not lost the metaphorical force of its etymology, and suggested *foreign* (the French *étrange*); the 'strange women' that Solomon loved were foreigners. Thus evil is made to appear as something external, an intruder into God's good world. In treatment, the 'Strange Woman' is identified with the grossest form of temptation, which in ancient Israel would be carried on mainly by those who were not Israelites. The most elaborate of the wisdom poems[1] is an idealised picture of such everyday temptation: we have a young man void of understanding, a woman wily of heart, a flattering speech, a going as of the ox to the slaughter, glimpses of a house that is a way to the abyss, with its slain a mighty host. Suddenly, by the boldest of transitions, Wisdom is presented in contrast as seduction to good.

> Doth not Wisdom cry,
> And Understanding put forth her voice?
> In the top of high places by the way,
> Where the paths meet,
>   She standeth;
> Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,
> At the coming in at the doors,
>   She crieth aloud.

All the attractions of Wisdom are displayed: subtilty, knowledge, discretion, hatred of evil, sagacity in government and justice; not these alone, but riches and honour and highest success. Wisdom rises beyond these to identity with the power that stamped perfection on the world God created.—

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[1] *Proverbs* vii–viii.

When he established the heavens I was there:
When he set a circle upon the face of the deep:
When he made firm the skies above:
When the fountains of the deep became strong:
When he gave to the sea its bound,
That the waters should not transgress his commandment:
When he marked out the foundations of the earth,
Then I was by him.

With the final words of entreaty and warning we have summed up the whole of wisdom literature in this its stage of simplicity and calm.

Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates,
  Waiting at the posts of my doors,
For whoso findeth me findeth life,
  And shall obtain favour of the Lord;
But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul;
  All they that hate me love death.

Sacred Wisdom in its Stage of Storm and Stress

The Book of Ecclesiastes

As we read the several books of wisdom in the order in which I have placed them, we notice not only variations in their spirit, but also a succession of changes in external literary form. *The Book of Proverbs* is made up wholly of disconnected proverbs, epigrams, and sonnets. To these, in *Ecclesiasticus*, are added maxims and essays. The addition is important: the brief form of the proverb or epigram admits only of single observations of life, whereas in the longer essay many different observations are grouped together under a given topic. In *Ecclesiastes* this grouping of thoughts is carried further: here the essays, while as before they are separated by strings of disconnected brevities, yet are found to unite in a common drift of thought, and are further bound into a unity by a prologue and epilogue. In *The Wisdom of Solomon* the strings of miscellaneous brevities disappear; the essays (or rather discourses) are connected together in a curious way that might be called *dove-tailing* — the last thought of one becomes the opening thought of the next. Thus we have at last arrived at a work continuous throughout. In *The Book of Job* the form changes altogether to that of drama and narrated story. The two last-named works differ from the rest in lacking the series of miscellaneous proverbs and epigrams. Yet these two books are full of wise and pithy sayings, which make the details of discourses or dramatic speeches. In other words, the lower wisdom, that observes the parts, has become absorbed into the higher Wisdom, that reflects upon the whole of life.

This literary structure of *Ecclesiastes* — five essays, separated by miscellaneous sayings, and bound into a unity by prologue and epilogue[1] — has an important bearing upon the traditional idea that the book was written by the historical king Solomon. Historic criticism, the province of which is to investigate questions of authorship, finds the internal evidence of the book pointing to a date centuries later than the time of Solomon. Yet the popular mind clings to the traditional idea, from a mistaken notion that the book itself names Solomon as its author. When the work is read in its true literary structure it will be seen how far this is from being the case. The prologue and epilogue are the most natural places in which to look for evidence of authorship: but these parts of *Ecclesiastes* lack all allusion to or suggestion of Solomon. The miscellaneous sayings are quite unlike what might be expected from a royal philosopher. Four of the five essays are without any light on the question of authorship. The allusion to Solomon is confined to the first essay, which opens with the words: —

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[1] For exact references, see Appendix.

> I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

This first essay, when examined, is found to be the record of an imaginary experiment, which was to survey pleasure, wisdom, power, in order to see what they might yield to wisdom. The author of the book, whoever he may be, following a frequent custom of ancient philosophy, has put the record of such an experiment into the mouth of the one historical personage who had the fullest means of making it: when the subject of this supposed experiment is concluded, the personality of Solomon disappears. This matter of authorship is important only because so many students, coming to *Ecclesiastes* with the idea that it is from the pen of Solomon, have read into the work the personality of the supposed author, and seen only the morbid complainings of a life vitiated by pleasure. Despair there is in the book: but, when examined without prejudice, it will be found to be the product of a noble mind, which in the midst of philosophic despair retains faith in God, and finds life full of happiness.

In the general survey of wisdom literature *Ecclesiastes* makes a stage all by itself. The analysis and questioning, hitherto reserved for the details of life, are now turned upon the universe as a whole: philosophy in this stage proves unequal to the task of finding a meaning in existence, and breaks down in despair. Though here, as before, are collected wise sayings on the details of conduct, yet 'Wisdom' in the larger sense disappears: the very word is lacking, and 'Vanity' takes its place. The calm reflection or rapturous celebration that belonged to the earliest wisdom has for a time ceased; philosophy has passed into a stage of storm and stress.

We must examine the several sections of the book. The prologue is only an expansion of the text, All things are vanity. External nature seems to this observer only a monotony of movement in a circle; human inquiry finds no satisfaction; there is no advance from generation to generation, but the thing that is is the thing that has been. In place of the old path of wisdom, *Ecclesiastes* finds existence a mere treadmill.

The first essay, as we have seen, imagines the one man in history who combined supreme wealth, wisdom, and power experimenting to see which type of life may be exalted as 'wisdom.' First, he plunges with all his resources into a life of pleasure. His experiment shall be bold: he will not be afraid of those pleasures men call follies, only he will take them, not as a fool does, but with his wisdom retained for the purpose of testing. The experiment in the life of pleasure is drawn out to the full: and the result, to the experimenter's wisdom, is that such life is vanity. Next, the life of wisdom is examined. The imaginary Solomon sees in an instant that wisdom surpasses folly as light surpasses darkness: yet the vanity of life reappears in the fact that the wise and the fool come to the same end of death. Similarly, when 'labour' or enterprise is surveyed, the successful labourer has to leave his vast schemes to his successor, who may be a fool: this also is vanity.

But there is a fourth branch to this survey of life, which is very interesting. May it be that the satisfaction which is being sought as 'wisdom' belongs to no one type of life; that it is to be found, not in the grand accumulation of wealth, of wisdom, or enterprise, but in the momentary appreciation of life as it passes, whether the life of pleasure, or wisdom, or power? Here it may be well to caution the reader on one point of style. *Ecclesiastes* is one of the most difficult books in all literature: and its difficulty is largely caused by the degree to which it carries what is called symbolic style of writing. This implies that particular ideas are represented arbitrarily, each by a particular formula of words. Thus when our author wishes to speak of actual life, as distinguished from life in the abstract, he will express it as "what is done under the sun"; when he conveys a sudden change of thought, he does it in the phrase, "I said in mine heart." Similarly, he uses the formula "eat and drink" to express appreciation of all kinds. Readers of the book who have the personality of Solomon in their minds, noticing the frequent recurrence of "eat and drink" in this work, are apt to run away with the idea that sensuous enjoyment is largely its topic. But the phrase "eat and drink" will be found applied to riches, even to honour: it is no more than a formula for expressing appreciation of anything whatever. In this spirit must be read the words of this first essay: —

> There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it is from the hand of God.

The fourth experiment of the imaginary Solomon has discovered that the very best thing in the whole world is the power to appreciate what life brings from moment to moment, whether of pleasure, or wisdom, or enterprise. Yet this fourth experiment, like the rest, is a failure: for the reflection soon follows, that such power to find happiness in life as it passes is a thing a man cannot secure by any effort of his own, but it is God's gift to the individual soul.

The first essay then has reached the negative result that no type of life bears examination as 'wisdom.' It has also contributed a positive thought, that what happiness there is in life is the direct gift of God.

The second essay brings up another theory of life, and considers only to reject it. The theory might perhaps be described by the modern term 'eclecticism.' Granted that no one side of life is to be identified with wisdom, may it not be that in the conception to be formed of this wisdom all the elements of life without exception have some place? The writer's formula for expressing this is that there is a time and season for everything under the sun. But this philosophy of times and seasons is overthrown by four arguments. First, it is true that all the elements of life have an attractiveness of their own. But the God who so created them also implanted in man's breast a sense of the universal, a craving to know "the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end": and this yearning after the meaning of the whole blots out all satisfaction from the parts. Again: it is true that all things are beautiful in their season. But the power to catch this beauty is the gift of God to the individual; no effort on his part can force it from One who acts by eternal laws. Once more: the 'seasons' of things are found to be reversed — wickedness is seen in the place of judgment. For a moment there comes the thought of an hereafter when these injustices may be set right; the next moment the thought is abandoned, in the absence of any evidence that man's death is other than the death of brutes. Finally, there are things — oppression, rivalry, bereavement — which no season can render beautiful. The second essay, like the first, fails to find wisdom. But it has repeated the positive thought before discovered, that satisfaction and happiness in life is God's gift to the individual soul.

A third essay illustrates the vanity of desire. But one of its illustrations is made by companion pictures: of a man who has all things to enjoy, with the power to enjoy them; of another man who lacks nothing that his soul desires, but God has withheld from him the power to enjoy what he possesses. A fourth essay, giving up wisdom as unattainable, inquires whether an approach toward wisdom may not be possible, and takes the form of notes by the way. But amid these negative notes there breaks out a sudden appeal to the man who has found happiness, who eats his bread with joy, and drinks wine with a merry heart, living joyfully with the wife he loves: he is bidden to continue in this joyful living, for "God has already accepted his works." With the continued failure to read any meaning into existence, there has thus grown stronger and stronger the positive thought, that actual happiness in life is God's gift; he who has it may recognise it as God's token of approval.

When we reach the fifth and last essay, the positive thought of happiness is supreme; and the vanity of all things is made a reason for emphasising the happiness of the happy. If a man live many years, he is to rejoice in them all, remembering the days of darkness and emptiness that are to come.

> Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement. —

— This last clause of caution refers to the everlasting controversy of good and evil in daily life (which is the regular meaning of 'judgment' in wisdom literature): the happiness of youth must always have regard to the distinction of right and wrong. With this one limitation happiness is made a duty.—

> — Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for youth and the prime of life are vanity.

Not happiness alone, however, but the remembrance of the Creator is to be emphasised in youth; both for the same reason — of the coming days when failing powers diminish strength alike for enjoyment and for worship. And the essay merges in the well-known sonnet which pictures under symbolic phrases old age, decay, and death.

There follows an epilogue which, reiterating that all things are vanity, finds this as the end of the matter: "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

We started with a prologue which said, All is vanity; we have reached an epilogue which says, All is vanity, fear God. From the one tone of mind we have travelled to the other by two distinct lines of thinking, kept continually side by side. One is a negative train of thought, a succession of failures to find any wisdom in the sum of things: the meaning of existence is God's secret. Therefore fear God. The other is a positive conviction, growing ever more emphatic: life is full of happiness, but the power to feel it is God's special gift to the individual soul. Therefore, again, fear God. Devout scepticism as a background for natural happiness — this seems to sum up the thought of *Ecclesiastes*. Scepticism is the fatigue of the analysing faculties; throughout the book the effort to analyse the universe breaks down in depressing failure. But the author holds God himself as responsible for scepticism, inasmuch as it is he who has implanted in the human breast the craving to know the work that God has been doing from the beginning to the end. Yet this scepticism makes the thinker, not impious, but the more God-fearing. More strange still, this writer, of all the sacred authors, is the one who emphasises happiness — not the pleasure that is reckless of right and wrong, but responsible, natural happiness — as the one best thing in God's universe, and God's own stamp of approval on the man to whom he grants it.

But what explains this thinker's failure to find any 'wisdom' in the universe he is seeking to analyse? The answer is clear: the world he examines is a world bounded by death. When the Preacher sees how the life of wisdom excels the life of folly, he is arrested by the sudden thought that both have the same ending. The life of laborious enterprise becomes vanity for the same reason — death and the leaving all to a successor who may be a fool. When the inequalities of life suggest a judgment hereafter, the thought is quenched in a further thought, that there is no known difference between the end of a man and the end of a brute. The circumscribed life in this world is rejected as meaningless. But just here is the point of transition to another work of wisdom: while *Ecclesiastes*, as if it were a matter of course, assumes death as the end of all, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, equally as a truth needing no argument, assumes that God made not death, and that righteousness is immortal. In this widened field of view despair yields to triumph, and Wisdom reappears in place of Vanity.

Sacred Wisdom in its Later Stage of Triumph

The Wisdom of Solomon

No two works can be more unlike in their style than *Ecclesiastes* and *The Wisdom of Solomon.* The one belongs to the Judaism of Palestine, and has the suggestive vagueness of Hebrew literature. The other comes from Alexandria, in which Hebrew and Greek thought had intermingled: the book is written in Greek, and exhibits all the rhetoric flow and subtle ingenuity of Greek style. Yet in their matter the two books are closely related: the full interest of *The Wisdom of Solomon* is felt only when it is read as an answer to *Ecclesiastes.* It is not, of course, an answer in the sense of a refutation or attack; nor is the one work referred to by name in the other. But the imperfection of one view of life is made to appear when beside it is placed a conception that is deeper and broader.

The first of the five discourses[1] in *The Wisdom of*

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[1] For references, see in the Appendix.

Solomon is extremely brief; when read by itself it seems commonplace. Its interest, however, becomes immensely heightened if it be understood as glancing at a portion of *Ecclesiastes*. That work had pictured a strange experiment in pleasure: the wise man was to plunge boldly into vice, yet retain his wisdom in order to test the worth of vice. The discourse we are considering rebukes such a conception, as tempting God.

> Wisdom will not enter into a soul that deviseth evil, nor dwell in a body that is held in pledge by sin.

The subtle temptation to experiment in folly for wisdom's sake is itself the highest unwisdom.

The difference of spirit between the two works stands more fully revealed in connection with the second discourse. Nothing is more prominent in *Ecclesiastes* than the writer's passionate insistence on death as the end of life, on the impossibility of seeing any difference between the death of a man and the death of a beast. With equal insistence *The Wisdom of Solomon* assumes the idea of immortality.

> God made not death: neither delighteth he when the living perish. For he created all things that they might have being; and the generative powers of the world are healthsome, and there is no poison of destruction in them . . . for righteousness is immortal.

As the early wisdom, in its phrase the 'Strange Woman,' treated evil as an intruder in God's good world, so here the life of the wicked is construed as inviting death into a world in which but for them it would have no place. In expansion of this thought we have a long monologue of the pleasure-lover.

> Short and sorrowful is our life: and there is no healing when a man cometh to his end, and none was ever known that gave release from Hades. Because by mere chance were we born, and hereafter we shall be as though we had never been . . . and our life shall pass away as the traces of a cloud, and shall be scattered as is a mist when it is chased by the beams of the sun. . . . Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that now are; and let us use the creation with all our soul as youth's possession. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and perfumes, and let no flower of spring pass us by. . . .

So far we have exactly the thought of *Ecclesiastes:* the shortness of life is to emphasise happiness. The Preacher had insisted that such happiness was to be kept within the bounds of right: but, as the monologue of the pleasure-seekers continues, we see how easily conceptions of pleasure pass into conceptions of evil.

> Let us oppress the righteous poor . . . because he is of disservice to us, and is contrary to our works . . . he is grievous unto us even to behold, because his life is unlike other men's, and his paths are of strange fashion. . . . The latter end of the righteous he calleth happy; and he vaunteth that God is his father. Let us see if his words be true, and let us try what shall befall in the ending of his life. . . . Let us condemn him to a shameful death.

As the author here breaks in upon this monologue of the wicked we get another point of contact with *Ecclesiastes*. The Preacher, in his general despair of reading God's ways with men, had exclaimed:[1] —

> The righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God: whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth it not; all is before them.

Catching up the Preacher's phrase the present discourse gives it another meaning. —

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[1] *Ecclesiastes* ix. 1.

> But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died; and their departure was accounted to be their hurt, and their journeying away from us to be their ruin: but they are in peace. For even if in the sight of men they be punished, their hope is full of immortality; and having borne a little chastening, they shall receive great good. . . . And in the time of their visitation they shall shine forth, and as sparks among stubble they shall run to and fro. They shall judge nations, and have dominion over peoples; and the Lord shall reign over them for evermore.

The picture is completed by another imaginary monologue of the same pleasure-seekers, rising from a dishonoured grave to encounter the despised righteous man in his triumph, and to pronounce their own life vanity.

A great feature of style in *The Wisdom of Solomon* is the use of the digression: in such by-paths of his argument this writer often places his most important thoughts. Thus, in this second discourse, he turns aside from the pictures of a world beyond the grave, in order to glance at the substitutes for the idea of immortality which had satisfied earlier thought. These substitutes were two: the living over again in posterity, and the long life in this world, which were regarded as the reward of the righteous. As to the first, says the present writer: —

> The end of an unrighteous generation is alway grievous. Better than this is childlessness with virtue. For in the memory of virtue is immortality, because it is recognised both before God and before men; when it is present men imitate it, and they long after it when it is departed, and throughout all time it marcheth crowned in triumph, victorious in the strife for the prizes that are undefiled.

The old view that virtue brought long life had had to confront the actual contradictions of facts: the mystery is solved by the thought of immortality.

> A righteous man, though he die before his time, shall be at rest. For honourable old age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is its measure given by number of years: but understanding is gray hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is ripe old age. Being found well pleasing unto God he was beloved of him, and while living among sinners he was translated. . . . Being made perfect in a little while he fulfilled long years: for his soul was pleasing unto the Lord: therefore hasted he out of the midst of wickedness.

The suggestion of *The Wisdom of Solomon* as an answer to *Ecclesiastes* is most potent in the third discourse. The one work had pictured the Solomon of history in an imaginary search for wisdom, from which he found only vanity. This third discourse is again a monologue of Solomon; no imagination is necessary, for an historic incident is presented, and Solomon finds wisdom, but finds it through prayer. The discourse simply works up, in impressive detail, the familiar incident of Solomon's vision at Gibeon, and his prayer for wisdom.

Here again it is the digressions that contain the most important matter of the whole discourse. Solomon has been saying that he had preferred wisdom to all things: he breaks off to bear testimony how all good things came to him with the wisdom he had chosen.

> . . . [God] gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that are: to know the constitution of the world, and the operation of the elements; the beginning and end and middle of times; the alternations of the solstices and the changes of seasons; the circuits of years and the positions of stars; the natures of living creatures and the ragings of wild beasts; the

> violences of winds and the thoughts of men; the diversities of plants and the virtues of roots. . . . For she that is the artificer of all things taught me, even Wisdom.

It is remarkable that the early wise men approached external nature only in the spirit of contemplation, reserving their analytic observation for human life. The passage just quoted is important as showing that, in this more advanced stage, all we call 'natural history' has become a part of Hebrew wisdom.

Still more important is the passage which immediately follows. Biblical philosophy in its first stage had recognised as distinct, yet perfectly harmonious, the wisdom of conduct, and the Wisdom seen to prevail throughout the whole universe. *Ecclesiastes* divorced the two: the Preacher continued to add to the wise maxims of conduct, but the survey of existence as a whole turned with him to the negative idea of vanity. In *The Wisdom of Solomon* the severed elements are to be reunited.

> For there is in [Wisdom] a spirit quick of understanding, holy, alone in kind, manifold, subtil, freely moving, clear in utterance, unpolluted, distinct, unharmed, loving what is good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, loving toward man, stedfast, sure, free from care, all-powerful, all-surveying, and penetrating through all spirits that are quick of understanding, pure, most subtil. For Wisdom is more mobile than any motion; yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty; therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her. For she is an effulgence from everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness.

There is more than rapturous encomium in this famous passage: the sense of harmony has been recovered between the world without and the world within, in a Wisdom that is "an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness."

From this point the matter of *Ecclesiastes* is left behind: what remains is the application of wisdom in its full sense to history. The fourth discourse runs through the succession of the fathers, showing how they were saved by wisdom. Adam rising out of his transgression into righteousness, Cain falling away from wisdom into murder, Abraham withstanding the yearnings of his heart when the sacrifice of his child is called for: here we have the wisdom of the world within. Adam protected in his loneliness as sole inhabitant of the world, Noah saved when a world perishes, Abraham called out to be founder of a new nation: here we see the wisdom outside man, the protecting providence. The two unite in Moses: wisdom enters into his soul and makes him strong to stand before kings; he is the great agent of the wise providence that guides God's people through the wilderness.

It is while the writer is dwelling on this last topic that we come upon the sentence —

> For by what things their foes were punished, by these they in their need were benefited.

This becomes the text of the elaborate fifth discourse, in length one-half of the whole book. Wisdom in the sense of providence is emphasised when a single principle, such as this text contains, can be traced in its continual recurrence throughout the history of the wilderness. Seven illustrations of the theme are elaborately worked out. The water turned into blood for the

Egyptians is contrasted with the water brought out of the rock for Israel. There are contrasts between the loathsome vermin, the rain of hail, which plagued Egypt, and the dainty quails, and rain of manna, with which Israel was blest. Noxious serpents attacked both, and death visited the sins of both: but by the brazen serpent Israel's curse was turned into a blessing, and at the intercession of Phinehas the plague of Israel was stayed.

The plague of darkness is put in contrast with the pillar of fire which lightened Israel in the wilderness journeys. In connection with the treatment of this theme I may note a feature of *The Wisdom of Solomon*, too important to be passed over. In the elaboration of his details the author of this work loves to do, by method of analysis, what poetry does by creation. Biblical history had pictured the Egyptian plague in the powerful phrase: "darkness which might be felt." The present writer sets to work to analyse and fill in to his description all that the victims may be supposed to have felt in that mysterious visitation. Haughty Egyptians, imagining they hold a holy nation in their power, suddenly find themselves prisoners of darkness, bound in the fetters of a long night, exiled from the eternal providence. Others, seeking the close recesses men choose for their secret sins, find indeed a mystic secrecy invading them: sundered each from the other by a dark curtain of forgetfulness they see, instead of the loved face, spectral forms, striking awe in the beholder; rushing sounds ring around them, and phantoms appear, cheerless with unsmiling faces. Wildly they struggle for light: no stars can pierce the gloom as they look up; as they kindle fire it proves not strong enough to prevail over the pervading gloom; and yet all about them are fearful glimmerings of fire self-kindled, until the horror of what they are forced to see is worse than the horror of failing to find the light they seek. Even where no spectral form confronts, yet the plagues of Egypt are all around: what with creeping vermin, and hissings of serpents, men perish with trembling, refusing to look upon the air, which can on no side be avoided. Or some have betaken themselves to peaceful slumber, holding night to be of all things the most powerless, coming out of powerless nothingness: yet the night for them can be haunted by dream monsters, until they feel the paralysis of the soul's surrendering in sleep.

> So then every man, whosoever it might be, sinking down in his place, was kept in ward shut up, in that prison which was barred not with iron: for whether he were a husbandman, or a shepherd, or a labourer whose toils were in the wilderness, he was overtaken, and endured that inevitable necessity; for with one chain of darkness were they all bound. Whether there were a whistling wind, or a melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, or a measured fall of water running violently, or a harsh crashing of rocks hurled down, or the swift course of animals bounding along unseen, or the voice of wild beasts harshly roaring, or an echo rebounding from the hollows of the mountains: all these things paralysed them with terror. For the whole world beside was enlightened with clear light, and was occupied with unhindered works; while over them alone was spread a heavy night, — an image of the darkness that should afterward receive them. But yet heavier than darkness were they unto themselves.

Space will not allow me to dwell further upon the exquisite ingenuity with which this writer works out the illustrations of his theme; nor upon the digressions which touch topics as interesting as his argument; nor the peroration which sees the elements of nature interchanging, like modulations in music, for the protection and glory of God's chosen people. Enough has been said to bring out the position of *The Wisdom of Solomon* in biblical philosophy. The first attempt to question the meaning of the universe as a whole had broken down, under *Ecclesiastes*, in stormy scepticism and cries of vanity. But the universe thus surveyed had been too narrow. Harmony and wisdom are triumphantly recovered by an observer who draws in to his field of view all nature, and finds it Law· all history, and reads it as Providence; who can see wisdom in all life, for life to him means Immortality.

Wisdom Dramatised: The Book of Job

The books of wisdom we have so far considered belong to the literature of contemplation: the thinker stands apart from life and views it from without, a process of thought appears only when it is completed. We now come to creative literature: circumstances of actual life are presented to us while they are yet happening, and thought is uttered in the process of thinking. This may be expressed by the title, Wisdom Dramatised. Yet *The Book of Job* is not completely described by the term 'drama': the greater part of it is a dramatic discussion, but the beginning and the end — what corresponds to the prologue and epilogue of ordinary plays — are in the form of narrated story. We may expect this difference of form to reflect a difference of spirit; and, in actual fact, the solutions of life's mysteries offered by the prologue and epilogue are distinct from — of course, not antagonistic to — the solutions discussed in the drama. There is another consideration more on the surface. The prologue makes known to the reader of the book certain circumstances of the case which are not known to the personages who in the drama enter into the discussion: had they been known, that discussion would have been entirely different. It would seem then that the proper treatment for this book is that the reader should first study by itself the dramatic portion, putting himself in the position of those who are speaking, and therefore dismissing from his mind what he has learned from the prologue. When the drama has thus been interpreted by its own light, then will it be proper to add to this interpretation what new suggestions are conveyed by the new matter of the prologue and epilogue.

The drama of *Job*, like so many dramas of antiquity, is the expansion of a single situation. It is a situation exactly challenging the whole theory of life which had satisfied wisdom in its first stage. The earlier wise men, we have seen, looked upon God's universe as a universe of good; evil was an intruding element in the good world, and a daily judgment was visiting evil with suffering.

> There shall no mischief happen to the righteous:
> But the wicked shall be filled with evil.

Now, in the past Job has appeared a perfect character, fearing God and eschewing evil: he has been crowned with all good fortune, until he is greatest of the children of the east. In a moment ruin has fallen upon him. On one single day messengers have brought news of his cattle carried away by Sabeans, his camels by Chaldean robbers; fire from heaven has destroyed his sheep, and the winds of the wilderness have crushed his family beneath their own roof. Before he has time to recover from this shock, loathsome disease invades his body; he creeps out of the village as one unclean, and takes his seat on the ash-mound with dogs and outcasts. His three Friends, wealthy and pious chieftains like himself, join him in his misery. The ash-mound becomes a stage, as spectators old and young gather around it to behold and listen, and learn wisdom from this unparalleled calamity. Job breaks the silence, and the drama is opened.

Who are the speakers in this dramatic discussion? The three Friends are, for the purposes of the argument, one: superficial differences of individuality vary the exposition of their opinion, but the opinion of one is the opinion of all. Their position may be expressed by the term 'rigid orthodoxy'; as the etymology of that word suggests, they hold their view because they believe it a *right view*, not in the way of men impelled to an opinion by argument, or won by its attractiveness. They think they are doing God service by upholding orthodoxy against attack; they entirely ignore all that is presented against their position, while hesitation to accept it they deem a sign of moral declension.

From among the spectators around the ash-mound there comes forth Elihu, of the noble family of Ram; he is a young man, and with difficulty overcomes his nervousness at interposing in a conversation of his elders. He represents orthodoxy modified. The difference between Elihu's position and that of the three

Friends appears to us small: Elihu himself seems to think this modification all that is needed for convincing Job. Once his opinion is put forth, Elihu holds to it in the spirit of the Friends.

The character of Job is altogether different: he brings to the discussion an open mind. Apparently Job has, in the past, united in the orthodoxy of the others; but now facts have roused his thinking powers, and he has the spiritual energy to cast off, at the call of circumstances, his most cherished beliefs, not in order to substitute for them a new belief — which is comparatively easy — but to maintain the more difficult attitude of negation, and face the ways of providence as an unsolved enigma.

There is yet another element in the dramatic dialogue, a Voice out of the Whirlwind: what is to be regarded as the significance of this it will be best to discuss later.

We must now examine the ground taken by the different parties to the discussion, in reference to this mystery of suffering so powerfully suggested by the dramatic situation. The position of the Friends is the theory belonging to wisdom literature in its first stage: that all suffering is judgment upon sin. Nine speeches illustrate this theme with every variety of rhetoric force; but the theory itself undergoes no change. Eliphaz in his opening[1] puts the doctrine as so much comfort for Job: the certainty that connects Job's suffering with his sin provides a sure escape from the suffering by the way of repentance. Bildad makes the doctrine as invariable as the processes of nature; Zophar thinks that to dispute it is to be wiser than God. When Job has shown resistance he is asked by Eliphaz, in a tone of indignation, whether he has an insight into the counsels of God hidden from all other wise men. Bildad pours forth imagery, Zophar accumulates wise saws, to illustrate the certain overthrow of the ungodly in spite of a momentary triumph. Job carrying his resistance further still, the Friends fall back on other things than argument. Eliphaz makes suggestion of positive transgressions into which Job must have fallen, and tenderly counsels repentance. Bildad dilates upon the unspeakable greatness of the God of providence. Finally, in a noble climax,[1] Zophar makes the whole edifice of wisdom rest upon the fear of the Creator and his judgments upon sin.

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[1] For references throughout, see *Job* in the Appendix.

Elihu's variation from this position is slight; yet it is a real modification. To him the connection between sin and suffering is as positive as it is to the others. But what Elihu elects to make prominent as to suffering is, not that it is judgment upon sin that is past, but rather how it serves as warning against sin in the future. The truth is the same; but it is presented in the form of mercy rather than of judgment. In this attractive setting Elihu hopes to see the common doctrine winning the adherence of Job. We are reminded of the way in which the son of Sirach restates the old principles of judgment in a form calculated to meet objections he has encountered.[2]

When we come to Job himself, the first point to be noted is that Job, at the outset, does not dispute the doctrine of the Friends. Eliphaz, he complains, has harshly interpreted mere cries of pain as if they were a theory of God's providential ways. Would Job lie to his friends if he were conscious of such sins as would account for this utter ruin? Sinless he never claims to be: but why cannot God pardon his sin, and let him take comfort before he departs into the land of darkness? To Bildad's argument Job even assents: "I know of a truth that it is so." But how is he to bring his case before the Divine Judge? In presence of that awful majesty the innocent is as helpless as the guilty. His comforters are but interested advocates for God: more and more Job appeals from the advocates to God himself. Zophar's instances Job scornfully accepts, but there are other facts to be explained: the tents of robbers prosper and the just man is made a laughing-stock, and yet the very beasts of the field can testify that the God who permits this is a God of power.

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[1] For the rearrangement of speeches here followed, see in the Appendix; and (more at length) in the *Job* volume of the *Modern Reader's Bible*, page 125.

[2] Above, page 141.

But with the movement of the dramatic discussion Job advances from this first position. He moves along two distinct lines of thought. Wisdom literature reaches its point of highest dramatic interest when we examine these two trains of thought, and find that Job, on the one hand, is attracted in the direction of *The Wisdom of Solomon*, which assumes a future life to set right the anomalies of this world; on the other hand, he is driven in the direction of *Ecclesiastes*, as the universe appears emptied of all meaning, a world in which triumph of evil is as patent as reward of good.

To appreciate the first of these trains of thinking,[1] in which we are to see trembling into being the first conception of that future life which made the sure foundation of wisdom literature in its latest triumph, we must grasp clearly the attitude of early thought to the future that is beyond the grave. When we in modern times speak of life beyond death, we mean a new life beginning with death. Antiquity rather conceived of this present life continuing, from the moment of death, a process of decay and diminishing consciousness. The body at a single moment is pronounced dead, yet takes time to crumble into dust; so the soul in a moment is sundered from intercourse with other life, yet (it was supposed) in its isolation has a gloomy sense of waning existence, before it passes into utter nothingness. Such accepted views of death are Job's views in his ordinary moments. Man is the cloud consuming and vanishing away; the waters failing from the sea; the river decaying and drying up; a tree may be revived by healing showers, but man lieth down and awakeneth not from his sleep till the heavens shall be no more. Most suggestive is the image of the landslip, that is the work of a moment, while there follows the slow wearing away by action of air and water: so is it with man.

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[1] From Job's last speech in the first cycle to his second speech in the second cycle (or Chapters xiv–xix).

> And surely the mountain falling cometh to naught,
> And the rock is removed out of its place,
> The waters wear the stones,
> The overflowings thereof wash away the dust of the earth:
> And thou destroyest the hope of man:
> Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth:
> Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away;
> His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not;
> And they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them;
> Only for himself [*in the grave*] his flesh hath pain,
> And for himself his soul mourneth.[1]

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[1] Chapter xiv. 18–22.

To modern thought the final goal of non-existence is a horror from which we shrink: the theme of Job's first utterance[1] is the dignity and rest of nothingness.

> For now should I have lien down and been quiet;
> I should have slept; then had I been at rest,
> With kings and counsellors of the earth,
> Which built solitary piles for themselves;
> Or with princes that had gold,
> Who filled their houses with silver . . .
> There the wicked cease from troubling,
> And there the weary be at rest.
> There the prisoners are at ease together;
> They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
> The small and great are there;
> And the servant is free from his master.

This accepted view of man's end is, for Job, shaken by a passionate desire which is more to him than life — the vindication of his innocence against the construction the Friends fasten upon his misfortunes. The few remaining moments of an old man's life seem too short to clear his character: is anything possible when life is over? At first, for a single moment only, the idea flashes upon him of the grave as a hiding place until the storm of providential mystery is overpast.

> Oh that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol,
> That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,
> That thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me!
> — If a man die, shall he live again? —
> All the days of my warfare would I wait, till my release should come,
> Thou shouldest call, and I would answer thee;
> Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of thine hands.

The thought of vindication beyond the grave is here no more than a passing fancy, dismissed by an ejaculation of impossibility even in the course of its utterance. But it soon recurs, and this time has acquired a tone of confidence.

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[1] Chapter iii. 13.

> O earth, cover not thou my blood,
> And let my cry have no resting place!
> Even now, behold, my Witness is in heaven,
> And he that voucheth for me is on high.

If the blood of the victim crying to heaven for vengeance is to find a heavenly champion, it must be beyond this life. But the bitter accusations continue, and Job is deserted by all: despairing of all other aid, the thought of the rescue that is to come from above rouses Job to sure faith, and to the solemn asseveration that makes one of the climaxes of the whole poem.

> Oh, that my words were now written!
> Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!
> That with an iron pen and lead
> They were graven in the rock for ever!
> For I know that MY VINDICATOR LIVETH,
> And that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth;
> And after my skin hath been thus destroyed,
> Yet without my flesh shall I see God!
> Whom I shall see on my side,
> And mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

By these few steps Job is driven, in the face of impossibility, to a faith in a providence of vindication apart from the flesh, beyond the grave.

But in other parts of the poem[1] the sufferer's thoughts are seen moving in a very different direction. The doctrine of the never failing judgment on the wicked has been pressed upon Job again and again: at last he is driven to give his whole mind to it, and he finds his soul agitated by rising doubts.

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[1] From Job's third speech in the second cycle (Chapter xxi).

> Even when I remember I am troubled,
> And horror taketh hold on my flesh.
> Wherefore do the wicked live,
> Become old, yea, wax mighty in power?
> Their seed is established with them in their sight.
> And their offspring before their eyes.
> Their houses are safe from fear,
> Neither is the rod of God upon them.
> Their bull gendereth, and faileth not,
> Their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.
> They send forth their little ones like a flock,
> And their children dance.

In a word, they spend their whole life in prosperity, and, when they must die, die all in a moment. Yet these are the men who said unto God: Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

At this challenge to the very foundations of orthodoxy the Friends, in great agitation, forget the dignity of debate, and break in with interruptions.[1] Eliphaz impatiently insists that there is no security in such delusive prosperity: —

> Lo, their prosperity is not in their hand:
> The counsel of the wicked is far from me.

But Job meets him with the question: —

> How oft is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out?
> That their calamity cometh upon them?
> That God distributeth sorrows in his anger?

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[1] For these interruptions, see the text (of Chapter xxi) as printed in *The Modern Reader's Bible*, pages 62–63, and the defence of this arrangement, page 127.

Bildad cries: —

God layeth up his iniquity for his children.

But Job retorts: —

Let him recompense it unto himself, that he may know it.
Let his own eyes see his destruction,
And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
For what pleasure hath he in his house after him,
When the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

Zophar is deeply shocked.

Shall any teach God knowledge,
Seeing he judgeth those that are high?

Job simply confronts him with the facts.

One dieth in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and quiet:
His breasts are full of milk,
And the marrow of his bones is moistened.
And another dieth in bitterness of soul,
And never tasteth of good.
They lie down alike in the dust,
And the worm covereth them.

The Friends are still eager to interpose, but Job waves them off. He knows their thoughts, and the old sentences about the tent of the wicked vanishing. But will they not "ask them that go by the way," and learn experience of actual life: how that the wicked is spared in the day of calamity, and is borne to a peaceful grave?

The debate falls back into its regular order, and Eliphaz passes from theory to open suggestions of sin on the part of Job. For answer, Job appeals to a Vindicator above: then, in quiet and orderly exposition, opens out this new view, that the times of the Almighty are not found in life by those who look for them. We get a complete evolution of social evil in this speech of Job.[1] He commences with the encroachments of private property upon the common land; the feebler people are driven to a life of hard labour, or the meagre subsistence of the wilderness.

> There are that remove the landmarks . . .
> They turn the needy out of the way:
> The poor of the earth hide themselves together.
> Behold, as wild asses in the desert they go forth to their work,
> Seeking diligently for meat;
> The wilderness yieldeth them food for their children.

Poverty necessitates borrowing, the oppression of usury is added to the burdens of the poor.

> They drive away the ass of the fatherless,
> They take the widow's ox for a pledge.

Poverty is the more bitter from contrast with the luxury of which it is forced to be the minister.

> They cut his provender in the field,
> And they glean the vintage of the wicked . . .
> And being an-hungered they carry the sheaves.
> They make oil within the walls of these men;
> They tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.

In due course we get the massing together of the labouring population, and the violence of city life.

> From out of the populous city men groan,
> And the soul of the wounded crieth out:
> Yet God imputeth it not for folly.

Finally, we have the evolution of a criminal class, who have broken altogether with the light, so that the sweet day-dawn comes to them as a shadow of death: murderers rising with first light from deeds of blood, thieves digging through houses in the darkness, the adulterer waiting for the twilight. Meanwhile, are the oppressors swept away by fierce floods? or dried up as by the drought of summer? Nay, —

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[1] Chapter xxiv.

> God by his power maketh the mighty to continue;
> They rise up, when they believed not that they should live.

So far is Job thus carried in his meditations upon social evil that he seems to reach the position of *Ecclesiastes*, the belief that the seasons of things are reversed, wickedness being found in the place of judgment: in other words, that the impunity of the wicked is as much a way of providence as judgment upon sin.

But when the Friends, and Elihu, and Job himself have worked out their various trains of thinking, yet another speaker is added to this wonderful drama. In the latter part of Elihu's speech[1] his thoughts are seen to be engrossed with phenomena of the heavens around and above him; the dramatic scene is changing, and soon the ash-mound is the centre of a tempest. At last the roar of the whirlwind is recognised as the Voice of God.

It is just at this point of *The Book of Job* that the utmost care is necessary in order to prevent misinterpretation of what is to follow. Errors of various kinds are to be avoided. For one: it may seem natural to some readers, especially to those familiar with the 'Divine Intervention' in Greek tragedies, to expect that, when God condescends to speak, what is said will be the solution of the mystery which has proved too hard for the other speakers. But this is not found to be the case in the present poem: whatever else this conclusion of the drama may mean, it certainly leaves the suffering of the righteous a mystery still. And, indeed, this is involved in the very literary form of the work. The dramatic portion of Job is wisdom literature, which has no foundation except observation of life: what light comes upon life's mysteries from the supernatural world is reserved for the prologue. Thus, though Deity is the speaker in this scene, he speaks nothing but what man may learn by his own observation.

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[1] From xxxvi. 22; see *Modern Reader's Bible*, pages 102–106, and notes on pages 172–175.

Again, it is common to understand the significance of the Divine Intervention to be the anger of the Almighty at Job's daring to question his judgments. This view is impossible, since in the epilogue God justifies Job and is displeased with the Friends: yet it was the Friends who denied the right to question the judgments of Providence, while Job had insisted on questioning. If this suggestion be modified so far as to make the point of the Divine speech the impossibility of fathoming the dispensations of heaven, then we may admit that this is part of what is said. But such an explanation gives no independent significance to this final section of the drama, since all the speakers, and notably Job, have dilated on the inscrutability of God's dealings.

To reach the true interpretation of the Divine Intervention we must not be content with the mere fact that Deity interposes, but must examine in full detail the elaborate speech that is put into the mouth of God. The result comes as a surprise. Except a single brief reference[1] to God as the power that brings low the proud and treads down the wicked, all the rest of this lengthy outpouring is occupied with the Providence of the world external to man. Though Deity speaks, only one aspect of Deity stands revealed: the LORD answers *out of the whirlwind*, and the God of the Divine Intervention appears as the Soul of External Nature.

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[1] Chapter xl. 7–14.

We must carry our examination a step farther yet. In this utterance of the God of Nature not even the whole of Nature finds a place. All that may be seen in external nature of destruction and cruel strife, all that waste in which nature seems so careless of individuals in order to be careful of type, all that a New Testament writer describes as the whole creation groaning and travailing together in pain: all this is entirely absent from the presentation of nature in *Job*. We find only a mystery of joy and power and sympathy, a world-wide sympathy by which all that is highest or most trifling is swallowed up in the jubilant consciousness of creative omnipotence. There pass before our vision the mystic building of earth, with the morning stars all around singing for joy; the making of cloud-wraps for the newly born ocean; the dayspring taking hold of the ends of the earth and shaking the wicked out of their place, while the monotonous surface below takes definiteness as clay changing under the seal, and the landscape stands out as a figured garment. Mysteries of life and death, of light, darkness, and the horizon that parts them, are lightly touched. Snow and hail reserved as in heaven's treasury against a day of battle, forkings of lightnings, scattering of east wind, channels of water floods — these are the daily joy of omnipotence, that forgets not even the solitary desert where no man is, but delights it with tender grass. Alike the wonders of the moving stars and the sport of the dust clods when the bottles of heaven's feast are poured out, alike the lioness hunting prey and the wild goats rearing their families among the rocks, alike the wild ass exulting in wilderness freedom and the ox abiding patiently by his crib at home: all things great and small have a place in the joy of Deity. The ostrich, so foolish that she cannot preserve her own young, has yet her pride when she outstrips the horse and his rider. The war horse knows no more fear than his rider: —

> He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;
> Neither standeth he still at the voice of the trumpet.
> As oft as the trumpet soundeth he saith, Aha!
> And he smelleth the battle afar off.

On the borderland of nature still greater wonders speak the Creator's joyous omnipotence: a behemoth, with tail as a cedar, bones as tubes of brass and limbs like bars of iron, unconcerned amid the swellings of Jordan; leviathan, one complete panoply against all human arts of destruction, breathing smoke and flame, with the ocean seething white around him.

When this self-revelation of the God of Nature stands before us in its fulness, we are able to see how it finds a place in this drama. Alike Job and his friends have been confining their attention to the mystery of evil, and its burden has become insupportable. What the Voice out of the Whirlwind does for them is to remind how the great, the good, the magnificent and sublime in nature, is shrouded in the same mystery that surrounds evil. The mystery of evil is not solved, but mystery itself is elevated until it ceases to be a burden. The innocent sufferer may turn from the dark providence of his own case, and refresh his strength in the contemplation of glorious mysteries all around him. So it is with Job. As long as he merely had suffering to endure, the sufferer met this with ideal patience; it was when false meanings were read into his ruin that Job's faith broke down in weary complainings. When the shock of whirlwind interpretation changes the current of his thoughts, he returns to more than his first faith.

> I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
> But now mine eye seeth thee:
> Wherefore I abhor myself,
> And repent in dust and ashes.

Some have inquired at this point, Of what then does Job repent? But it must be remembered that from the outset Job has never claimed to be sinless. Conscious of freedom from such crimes as would justify his ruin, he has passionately desired to come into the presence of the Divine Judge. But in that presence even the faintest sense of sin abhors itself in dust and ashes.

The whole dramatic portion of *Job* has now been covered. Side by side with its moral impressiveness, we cannot fail to catch the literary interest of the poem as a dramatisation of wisdom literature. The dogma of judgment, which enabled wisdom in its first stage to maintain a philosophic calm by ignoring the real difficulties of life, is here confronted by an actual experience which directly challenges it. The resulting movement of thought carries us, now in the direction of sacred philosophy in its stage of storm and stress, when the universe seemed a mystery of contradictions; now in the direction of that later triumph of wisdom which explained this world by the light of the world to come. And the finale turns back to the other side of primitive wisdom, which supplemented its observations of human life by unquestioning contemplation of God's whole creation, and found it, as its Creator had found it, very good.

We may now turn to the narrative story which serves as prologue and epilogue to the drama of *Job*. The scene enlarges to take in heaven; we pass outside the wisdom literature that observes human life, and have unveiled to us mysteries of the supernatural world. It may be asked, to what type of literature, if not to wisdom, are the prologue and epilogue of this book to be referred? The answer to this question involves the answer to another. Are we to understand the two opening chapters as a narrative of events which actually occurred? or are they part of the parable which the rest of the book dramatises? I know no means of settling that question: nor is it necessary. If the opening story is a story of what has actually occurred, then the prologue to *Job* is in the highest sense prophecy: it brings a revelation of truth direct from God himself. If, on the other hand, the incident of the council in heaven is only imagined as part of a parable, then this may be called poetic speculation — reverent speculation upon mysteries of providence. Wisdom literature, however, is not speculation as to what may be, but observation as to what is.

It is convenient first to deal with the brief epilogue. This narrates that the anger of the Lord was kindled against the Friends of Job, because they had not said of him the thing that was right, as his servant Job had.

Thus the reverent boldness of Job, that could appeal from God's judgments to God's justice, was more acceptable to him than the servile adoration of the Friends, who had sought to bend the facts in order to magnify God. God himself has no higher interest than the truth.

In our study of the prologue, we are at the very commencement encountered by a serious obstacle — a popular and widespread misunderstanding, that rests upon an infelicity in the received translations. It is written how the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and "Satan" came also among them. Even in King James's version the margin offers the alternative "or the Adversary." But the difference between these two readings is immense. The Hebrew word *Satan* means *adversary*: but it is used in different parts of Scripture in two very different ways. Sometimes it appears as a proper name: Satan, the Adversary of God and author of evil. In other places the word is only a title of an office — the Satan or Adversary: in no way hostile to God, but an 'adversary' in the sense that an overseer or inspector is for the time being the adversary of those he oversees or inspects. The Hebrew conception was that under God the supreme judge there were viceroys, called sometimes 'the holy ones,' sometimes 'sons of God' or even 'gods.' Sometimes they appear to have different worlds for their provinces: —

When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy.[1]

In other places peoples of the earth are their charge. Thus in the eighty second psalm we have an arraignment of these supernatural viceroys of God.

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[1] *Job* xxxviii. 7.

God standeth in the congregation of God;
He judgeth among the gods.

The supreme God inveighs against the moral confusion that reigns through the earth, and threatens the slack overseers.

I said, Ye are gods,
And all of you sons of the Most High.
Nevertheless ye shall die like men,
And fall like one of the princes.

The superhuman character of these world-overseers is shown in the fact that the punishment threatened is their degradation to the rank of mortals. So the Satan or Adversary in the prologue to *Job* comes amongst the sons of God; there is no difference between his reception and the reception of the rest. These have come from their several provinces; the Satan reports himself as Inspector of Earth: he comes "from going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it." If misleading associations from the other use of the word "Satan" are dismissed, it will be seen that there is nothing malignant in the action attributed to this official of heaven. He simply performs the duty of his office when he raises the question of the true meaning of Job's piety: it is the office of an inspector to suspect. It is indeed from the lips of this Adversary that we are to receive the highest interpretation of the mystery of suffering.

When once this misunderstanding has been cleared out of the way, the narrative becomes luminous with suggestion. In the councils of heaven the province of Earth is under review, and God instances Job as a type of perfect service. The Inspector of Earth, as in duty bound, puts the possibility that what seems to be perfection may be only policy. Job has had a life of unbroken prosperity: according to the doctrine of judgment — that righteousness brings prosperity and sin brings ruin — Job may have only been manifesting enlightened self-interest, in continuing the conduct which has seemed so well rewarded. If however he were to be visited with adversity, there would be a chance for Job to show whether he would cling to goodness when goodness brought no reward. The experiment is permitted; for life is a state of probation. Job is suddenly overwhelmed with ruin: he does not merely accept the ruin, but makes it an occasion for remembering the giver of the happiness he has lost.

> The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away:
> Blessed be the name of the LORD.

In the council of heaven that follows the Adversary honours the constancy of Job by advancing a still severer test, and is permitted to smite the patriarch with loathsome disease. Even the good wife of Job loses faith at last, and bids her husband renounce all belief in God. Not so Job: he asks, Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The experiment has been complete, and probationary suffering may be withdrawn; when the narrative is resumed in the epilogue, it is told how all his prosperity returned to Job, and he waxed greater than before.

Thus the prologue to *Job* has opened out a higher view of suffering than any that appears in the dramatic discussion. In the councils of heaven, where the ways of providence are determined upon, suffering is seen employed as a test of saintship; the unmerited troubles of the good are the only means whereby they have the opportunity of showing whether they love good for its own sake, or whether they have only been following right because they believe it brings happiness. It was from zeal for the righteousness of providence that the three Friends and Elihu contended for their doctrine of judgment: that fate is always determined by character. They fail to see that if this were so — if there were an invariable connection between right action and prosperity, wrong action and ruin — then goodness in the highest sense would be impossible; man would have no moral choice between right and wrong, but only a question of self-interest as between prosperity and suffering. It is the breaches in the law of retribution — the wicked often allowed to prosper, while the righteous must suffer the penalties of the wicked — that make the final sifting, between those who are simply wise, and those who are truly good. Job in the midst of his perfect life is visited with ruin: he rises higher —

> Though he slay me, I will trust him.

The three children of Babylon are confronted with the fiery furnace for their piety; they are speaking their past convictions when they say, —

> Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, —

but they rise higher in the crisis of judgment, and face the other alternative, —

> *but if not,* be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods.

The highest point that can be reached by wisdom, with its reflections on human life, is an enlightened conception of retribution: Righteousness is the way to prosperity, if not here, then hereafter. But the prologue to *Job* opens out a higher conception still: Righteousness, though at the cost of prosperity. Beyond wisdom there is faith.

Such then is *The Book of Job*. Its central part draws into a single dramatic movement all the varying aspects of wisdom, the wisdom that founds itself upon observation of life. The prologue and epilogue rise beyond wisdom, to the faith that can penetrate into the mysteries of the supernatural.

CHAPTER VI

NEW TESTAMENT WISDOM

In the ordinary acceptance of the term, the wisdom literature of Holy Scripture is limited to books of the Old Testament and Apocrypha. Yet three books of the New Testament may profitably be read in this connection, although it must be said at once that for two out of the three the term 'wisdom literature' would be an imperfect description. The appearance of Jesus Christ upon earth has effected a vast revolution in human thought; not so much in the thoughts men may think, as in what men actually do think. The philosophic tone of mind which realises itself in wisdom must have felt this revolution. It is not surprising, then, to find that one of the New Testament epistles, and two of the gospels, differ from other gospels and epistles in the degree in which they approach the literary character of philosophy or wisdom. These three works are the subject of the present chapter.

Wisdom Christianised: The Epistle of St. James

In this work there is nothing of the epistle except the superscription. The regular order of thought which appears in *Hebrews* or *Romans* is lacking; nor is there a trace of that reference to affairs of particular churches which characterises the pastoral epistles. Like the Old

Testament books of wisdom, this epistle is a miscellany of sayings, essays, and discourses. The topics are such as these:[1] The Joy of Temptation, The Prayer for Wisdom, On Respect of Persons, Faith and Works, The Judgment to Come. The book is thus a collection of meditations on life, as life is lived among the followers of Christ. It is Wisdom Christianised.

Of the other books of wisdom *Ecclesiasticus* is the one which St. James's epistle most resembles. Indeed, every reader of the two books is struck by the way in which St. James has meditated upon and absorbed the thoughts of the son of Sirach. It would be easy by parallel passages to bring out the close resemblance of the two writers. It is more important to bring out their differences.

Ecclesiasticus moralises upon a world bounded by death. There is not so much as the thought of a future life: where the son of Sirach sees his doctrine of the judgment on sin contradicted by facts, he looks for its vindication no farther than the posterity of the sinner in the next generation.[2] At a later stage of Old Testament wisdom immortality is recognised, and made a foundation for wisdom.[3] Of course, in the Christian thought of St. James the future immortality is an article of faith. But St. James goes farther than this. Not only is there a judgment to come, but it is close at hand. The apostle speaks as one of those who are living in the last days, for whom it is folly to say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city and spend a year there and trade and get gain. To his suffering brethren he cries that the coming of the Lord is at hand, that the "judge standeth before the doors." The old wisdom maxims of rich and poor become charged with tenfold force at this final moment of time. The luxurious oppressors of the poor are fools investing in a future they are never to see. "Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days."

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[1] For references, see in the Appendix.

[2] Especially the Essay I, xliv, *i.e.* Chapter xi. 11–28.

[3] Above, page 155, *Wisdom of Solomon.*

One feature separated *Ecclesiasticus* from the rest even of Old Testament wisdom. Most of the wisdom writings reflect on life in general, rather than the special life of Israel. The son of Sirach is an enthusiastic Israelite; and the centre of his veneration is the Law. It is he who poetically imagines[1] Wisdom wandering lonely over the whole creation, until its Author bids her find a tabernacle in Jacob; dropping poetry for prose the son of Sirach adds: —

> All these things are the book of the covenant of the Most High God, even the law which Moses commanded us for a heritage unto the assemblies of Jacob.

Now St. James also is forever exalting "law": but with him it is "the law of liberty." The first burning question of the Christian church had been the relation of its converts to the Mosaic system, and with difficulty had been won the doctrine of freedom from such law. To too many Christians of that age this freedom came as a reaction to license. To St. James this liberty is a deeper and more binding law: a heart devotion in place of superficial conformity. He exalts "the perfect law, the law of liberty."

Not only was the author of *Ecclesiasticus* a worshipper of the Law, but he exalts above all men the scribes, whose business is to expound this law of Moses. In his most elaborate essay[1] he pours contempt upon the idea that 'wisdom' is possible for him who holds the plough, for the artificer and workmaster, the smith or potter. These have indeed a lower wisdom of their own.

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[1] Preface to Book II (see in the Appendix), or Chapter xxiv.

> All these put their trust in their hands; and each becometh wise in his own work. . . . In the handywork of their craft is their prayer.

As against such classes of men the son of Sirach exalts the men of leisure, who can apply themselves to the law of the Most High. The scribe upholds his order as an aristocracy of wisdom: his successors in St. James's day would cry, The people that knoweth not the law is accursed. Very different is the tone of the New Testament epistle.

> My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith?

St. James also distinguishes two wisdoms: but the one is the wisdom that cometh from above, pure, peaceable, gentle. The aristocratic spirit of the scribe he would have relegated to the other wisdom, which is "earthly, sensual, devilish."

But there was another side, as we have seen, to early wisdom, when it turned from reflection on details of life to contemplate, in a tone of adoration, the universe as a whole. The counterpart of this in the New Testament epistle is, not adoration, but reverent speculation as to foundation mysteries of life. The profoundest writing of St. James is his essay on the Origin of Evil and Good in Man.[1] It starts with the topic of temptation, by which the presence in us of the conflicting principles is brought to the surface. The oldest wisdom had recognised how evil is a thing foreign to God's creation. So St. James insists that God, whose nature cannot be tempted with evil, cannot be the foundation of temptation on earth. Its origin is thus expressed.

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[1] III, xv (see in the Appendix), or Chapter xxxviii. 24.

> Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.

The image of childbirth is employed. One parent is the individual will; the other parentage is left vague. There is the due period of gestation, and sin is born. But the image is carried forward, as it were, to a second generation, and sin then bears death. The literary reader will remember how this thought of St. James is made by Milton the foundation of a noble myth. Satan, on his journey to introduce temptation on earth, is encountered at Hell gate by the forms of Sin and Death. Satan and the monster Death are on the verge of conflict, when the form of Sin rushes between, and hails the two as father and son. To their amazed questioning Sin makes answer, addressing Satan:[2] —

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[1] See in the Appendix, or *James* i. 12–24.

[2] *Paradise Lost*, ii. 747.

Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul? once deemed so fair
In heav'n, when at th' assembly, and in sight
Of all the seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against Heav'n's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swam
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth; till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
Out of thy head I sprung: amazement seized
All th' host of Heav'n; back they recoiled afraid
At first, and called me SIN: and for a sign
Portentous held me; but familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing
Becamest enamoured, and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret, that my womb conceived
A growing burden.

With the thought of St. James Milton has skilfully combined the classic myth of Athene springing fully armed out of the brain of Jove — an offspring born of a single parent without aid of mother. The speech of Sin continues, to tell how, sunk to Hell, she brought forth the hideous monster Death. But Milton carries the thought farther: fresh incest between Death and Sin begets hellish monsters who prey upon their own mother. The dread pedigree stands fully revealed: Lust, Sin, Death, Corruption.

The essay turns to the origin in us of Good. The image of child-bearing is again used, but God is now the parent.

> Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

The germ so begotten in the soul St. James calls "the inborn word." He proceeds to the development of this germ of good in man. Having called the germ of good an inborn *word*, he naturally uses the image of listening: we must listen patiently to catch the faint voice within, avoiding all that would drown the gentle sound.

> Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: . . . putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the inborn word.

Had the essay stopped here, the impression would have been left that only passive attention was necessary. The author goes on to the thought that what is heard must be translated into action: we must be doers of the word, and not hearers only. The image changes to that of a mirror:

> If any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

But what of him who doeth as well as heareth? He will behold his action reflected in the mirror of the law. But St. James adds his favourite idea: it must be "the perfect law, the law of liberty." The essay ends with a contrast between word religion, and the religion of unspotted thought and charitable action.

In its form then *The Epistle of St. James* is a reversion to the miscellany of wisdom literature in its earliest stage. In its matter we see human life, whether in its details of action or mysteries of faith, as life was leavened by the spirit of Christianity.

Wisdom applied to the Life of Christ

The Gospel of St. Matthew

It would be an imperfect description of St. Matthew's gospel to speak of it as wisdom literature. Yet its distinctiveness from the other gospels is brought out if we regard it as the spirit of wisdom applying itself to the supreme topic, the life and work of Jesus Christ. To realise this description we must here, as elsewhere, keep distinct the two functions of wisdom: wise reflections on various aspects of human life, and again, the comprehension in a single view of the whole providential government of God.

St. Matthew's gospel, it is obvious, abounds with wise proverbs of humanity and life. There is surely nothing derogatory to higher claims of Jesus if we say that he must be included in the inner circle of the world's literary authors: what Homer is in epic poetry, what Shakespeare is among dramatists, that Jesus of Nazareth is as a sayer of sayings. Nor is there any need to inquire curiously, as some have done, how far the familiar sayings of Jesus have been anticipated by his predecessors. Originality has no place in wisdom literature: in regard to *Ecclesiasticus* or *Ecclesiastes*, it is impossible to determine which sayings of these books were 'pondered' by their authors, and which 'sought out' and added to their collections. Proverbs are commonplaces: wisdom appears in the selection of what sayings are to be made prominent as the true interpretation of life. It is hardly necessary to use illustrations at this point. Let the dead bury their dead — They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick — Men put not new wine into old wine-skins — I came not to send peace but a sword upon earth — Wisdom hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes — The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence — He that saveth his life shall lose it — He that hath to him shall be given — Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's: these paradoxes are amongst the profoundest of life's principles. Yet these are among the slighter sayings of Jesus. What literature associates mainly with his name are the wonderful parables: children love them, they are grasped at once by the unlettered; yet the deep thinker, the more he thinks, sees more and more a whole philosophy of life standing out clear from a story of half-a-dozen lines.

Such sayings and parables are recorded in all the gospels: more of them by St. Matthew than by the other evangelists. But of the first gospel there is a further distinctiveness in the way in which such sayings are brought together into a system of wisdom. What tradition calls 'The Sermon on the Mount' is no sermon, as we understand the term. The characteristic teaching of Jesus in the earlier part of his career is here massed together and made a symmetrical whole: the teaching is the teaching of Jesus, the arrangement — as comparison with other gospels shows — is the arrangement of St. Matthew. In accordance with the usage of the term elsewhere this Sermon on the Mount would be fitly entitled: 'The Wisdom of Jesus.'

For the form given to Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount St. Matthew has gone to Old Testament wisdom. When properly printed its structure will be seen to be founded on the 'maxim': the saying which is made up of a proverb text and an expansion in prose. Six divisions of the discourse are maxims of this kind; it is in keeping with all wisdom literature that the seventh division should be found to be a string of shorter sayings and maxims.[1] Such considerations of form have a bearing upon interpretation. Thus, the opening of the Sermon on the Mount is known as 'The Beatitudes,' and it is customary to reckon them as eight in number. We should rather say that there is but one beatitude: what follows is its sevenfold expansion.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

> Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The opening couplet gives the keynote of Christ's work among men: the centre of gravity of human life has been shifted, what before was great has become small, the small has become great. Those who read eight beatitudes have some difficulty in deciding exactly what is the distinctive meaning of the term 'poor in spirit.' But for the meaning of this we must look to the seven sentences that expand it. Who are are the poor in spirit? The mourners: the thought of the Preacher[1] is echoed, that it is better to go into the house of mourning than into the house of feasting, how there is a deeper wisdom in sorrow than in joy. Who are the poor in spirit? The meek: those whom once Eliphaz contrasted with lords of great inheritance: —

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[1] It is so printed in the *St. Matthew* volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible.*

> Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,
> And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry;
> But as for the mighty man, he had the land,
> And the honourable man, he dwelt in it:
> Thou hast sent widows away empty,
> And the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

Now this is reversed; it is the meek who are the magnates of the new kingdom. Who are the poor in spirit? They that hunger and thirst after righteousness: not the Pharisees, whose broad phylacteries, and alms done before men, and prayers in the corners of the streets, proclaim that they have attained, but the publican smiting his breast with a sense of emptiness of all spiritual attainment. Who are the poor in spirit? The pure in heart: the fifteenth psalm has sung the purification of life and humility of heart which might fit him who should sojourn in God's tabernacle; more blessed now the pure shall see God himself. Who are the poor in spirit? The merciful and not the oppressor; the peacemaker, in contrast with the warrior who has received the homage of men hitherto. Seventhly and lastly, who are the poor in spirit? The curtain of the far past and future is lifted.

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[1] *Ecclesiastes* vii. 2.

and the long array is seen of those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake: but at this moment it is a sight for rejoicing, for the persecutor seems less blessed than his victim.

There follow two maxims on the texts, Ye are the salt of the earth, Ye are the light of the world. Brief comments enforce each. Salt is not food, but that which gives food its savour: if it ceases to produce effect on what is about it, it is of all things the most useless. So light is not light if it is hidden: the church that does not make goodness attractive has lost its right to exist. The central place of honour in the whole discourse is given to the text: —

> Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets:
> I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

The elaborate comment on this calls for a righteousness to exceed the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees: it leads up to the thought, Be ye perfect. Other maxims bring out the heavenward reference of our actions, more than this, of our very desires. The final section strings together many wise sayings, and finds a conclusion to the whole discourse in the parable of the man that built on the rock and the man that built on the sand.

It is time to turn to the other conception of wisdom, the survey of Divine providence as a whole. Such larger wisdom is many-sided: only a single aspect of it has application to the present case, and this is Divine wisdom as reflected in history. From three out of the five books of wisdom so far reviewed history has been altogether absent; no place for it was found in *Proverbs*, or *Job*, or *The Epistle of St. James*. It appears in the last and longest section of *Ecclesiasticus:* here history is drawn within the general wisdom that is a theme for adoration, and the invocation, "Let us now praise famous men," ushers in a glorious succession of the fathers. Where *The Wisdom of Solomon* touches history, it is to trace the minute workings of providential government in the guidance of the chosen people through the wilderness to the land of promise. To St. Matthew wisdom history takes another form yet: the distinguishing task of this evangelist is to trace the expansion of THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN upon earth.

The early sections of the first gospel seem only preliminary. They are occupied with recognising in Jesus the fulfilment of prophecy; though even here it is suggestive that St. Matthew alone records the Visit of the Wise Men to the infant Christ. The true starting point of the history is found at the words: —

> From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye, for the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN is at hand.

It needs an effort on our part to realise the full force of this simple sentence. The history of Israel as a spiritual kingdom, with no ruler except the invisible God, had broken down in shame and captivity. Redeemed from exile a small remnant had indeed been able to found a spiritual community; but generations of bitter history had mocked their hopes, and crushed them beneath a foreign yoke. Meanwhile, they had seen their dreams of a world empire fulfilled before their eyes, but not for them: it was Rome that had the nations for its inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for its possession. Their one yearning, as they surveyed the providence of history, was for the promised leader who should restore the kingdom from Rome to Israel, and change earthly domination to the rule of heaven through its Messiah. At this juncture the Israelite pointed out by the Baptist as his successor moves through the land, crying that "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Following this starting point we find the Sermon on the Mount. This is simply the charter of the kingdom of heaven: the constitution and principles of the new society. All the rest of the gospel is occupied with the realisation in actual fact of the kingdom of heaven, so long as the life of its founder on earth extends. It is profound philosophical history: clear and pointed in its arrangement, when once the principle of this arrangement has been caught. The foundation thought of St. Matthew as the historian of Christ's kingdom on earth may be best given by an image used in the gospel itself. John the Baptist says of his successor: —

> Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly cleanse his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

The words must not be limited to some far-off event of judgment. From the moment of Christ's first appearance his word is a winnowing fan, dividing and sundering among men: more and more the true seed is drawing together, nucleus for the kingdom of heaven; more and more what is incongruous and out of harmony is being repelled, swelling into a heap of mere chaff for the burning. This one thought dominates St. Matthew's whole gospel, and underlies its very structure.

Perhaps the following scheme may give assistance in catching the historian's plan, and the way in which his narrative falls into natural divisions in relation to a fundamental idea.

1*

Birth of Jesus.

2

Appearance of Jesus in public.

3

Opening of the Ministry: the Sermon on the Mount

4

The Winnowing Fan: Gathering of Disciples and Hints of Antagonism.

5

[*The Church*] Organisation of Apostles and the Sevenfold Commission.

6

[*The World*] Growing Isolation of Jesus from contemporary Religion.

7

[*The Church*] The Public Parable and the Private Interpretation.

8

[*The World*] The Greater Miracles and the Growing Antagonism.

9

[*The Church*] Full Recognition of the Kingdom by the Disciples.

10

[*The World*] Entry into Jerusalem and Breach with the Ruling Classes.

11

[*The Church*] The Sevenfold Revelation of the End to the Disciples.

12

[*The World*] The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus.

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* For references, see *St. Matthew* in the Appendix.

The section that follows the Sermon on the Mount presents the kingdom of heaven in embryo: we see together for a while the elements which later on drew farther and farther apart. It gives the first impressions made by the preaching of Christ: the gathering of disciples around him, and also the hints — at this point no more than hints — of antagonism that is to come. The first band of twelve disciples is founded; the leper and paralytic are driven by their sufferings to Jesus; demons bear testimony to him; a centurion appears, firstfruits of followers outside the ranks of Israel; even rulers and scribes press in, and Jesus must restrain the growing excitement. At the same time we hear doubts — but unspoken doubts — when the sinner is pronounced forgiven; respectful questionings follow, why Jesus should shock patriotism by companying with publicans, why shock morality by eating with open sinners. The section reaches an appropriate close in a brief incident: a wonder of healing has been done; the multitude cry that nothing like it has been seen in Israel; the Pharisees mutter in their hearts the blasphemy that later will be spoken openly.

From this point St. Matthew's narrative falls into a succession of diverging and contrasting sections. The winnowing fan is doing its work: alternately our attention is occupied, now with the followers of Jesus approaching more and more nearly to an organised kingdom of heaven, now with the world outside, repelled more and more to antagonism that is strong enough at last to quench the earthly life of the Master.

The fifth section in the arrangement I am suggesting gives us the first stage in the organisation of the kingdom

— the sending forth of missionaries. Its starting point is the thought that the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. It is characteristic that where other gospels show various expeditions and successive injunctions, St. Matthew gathers the whole into a single organisation of apostles and a sevenfold commission. The mission is limited to Israel: the chosen people are to have the first message of the kingdom. No force may be used in the spreading of the gospel: only works of preaching and healing. It is not a hired ministry: freely the apostles have received; they must freely give. Yet they are to accept hospitality: the labourer is worthy of his hire. Attitude to the inevitable opposition is laid down: the representatives of Jesus are to be as sheep among wolves. Another article puts the paradox of the kingdom, that Christ is come not to send peace upon earth but a sword: the proclamation of the kingdom of peace will bring a warfare, not between nation and nation, but within each household, with daughter in law arrayed against mother in law and mother in law against daughter in law. Finally, the reward is spiritual: he that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward.

The section that follows turns to the world without: we see the growing isolation of Jesus as his ministry progresses. At the outset John the Baptist sends a message of impatience: Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? The message is gently answered; then Jesus sorrowfully recognises, not indeed antagonism, but the imperfection of his great predecessor.

> Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Now we find isolation from the wisdom of the world, such wisdom as appears established in the great cities that are rejecting the light. Wisdom is hidden from the wise and revealed unto babes, and henceforward Jesus turns to the weary and heavy laden. Separation is next seen from the great national institution of the sabbath: not, indeed, from the sabbath itself, but from the ostentatious observance which was cherished as a badge of Judaism. Jesus will not have his disciples hindered from plucking ears of corn on their sabbath walks, he will not cease his work of healing: the son of man is lord of the sabbath. At last the Master is in open rupture with the religious world. Pharisees speak out the blasphemy they had before muttered — that Christ must be casting out devils by aid of the prince of devils. This is to Jesus the climax of evil: worse than opposition to himself, it is antagonism against the spirit of healing, to which alone he appeals for evidence of his mission. It is a sin that knows no forgiveness: these words of Jesus are not a threat, but a sorrowful reflection: what hope can there be for those who are attacking the spirit of healing itself? The historical instinct of Matthew has concluded this section with the sundering of Jesus from his own kindred, who vainly interfere. Henceforward his mother and his brethren are they that do the will of his Father which is in heaven.

The seventh section returns to the children of the kingdom. An era in the teaching of Jesus seems to be marked by the parable of the Sower, and the six parables that follow. But the parable does not stand alone; Matthew seems to be presenting at one view the whole institution of the Public Parable and the Private Interpretation. —

> And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? And he answered and said unto them: Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.

The force of this remarkable passage is somewhat lost to the English reader by the change, in modern speech, in the signification of the word 'mystery.' In Bible English it must be understood in such sense as in the expression, The Eleusinian Mysteries: secret societies, with a superficial truth presented to the outside world, a hidden meaning for those who are initiated. The 'mystery of godliness' is not its strangeness, but the great truth that godliness is not an open philosophy, which all can judge of for themselves, but a spiritual experience which can be learned only by being godly. The hymn-writer has expressed the essence of the thought in his spiritual rapture: —

> The love of Jesus, what it is,
> None but his loved ones know.

The parable is itself a winnowing fan; and the kingdom of heaven has reached a higher stage of organisation in this distinction of the hearers who only hang on the word, and the disciples who have pressed into the hidden meaning.

We pass from this to hear of the Greater Miracles and the Growing Antagonism. The miracles of this section are greater only in the sense that they are more wide-reaching. St. Matthew records here, not cases of individual healing, but the feeding of multitudes by miraculous means, the power of Jesus to control the sea itself; again — hardly less wonderful to its own age — the sight of Jesus at his sacred work in the heathen regions of Tyre and Sidon, with a Canaanitish woman receiving crumbs from Israel's table. Side by side with this we see the repelling influence of the gospel growing greater. At the outset of this section Christ's own city has cast him off. Then comes the deputation from Jerusalem inquiring why the Tradition of the Elders is being transgressed. This Tradition of the Elders means the whole religious orthodoxy of the period. Reverence for the Law of Moses had long before passed into an idolatry; lest inadvertence might transgress, successive teachers had built 'a hedge about the law' — minute distinctions of lawful and unlawful, the frivolity of which had drawn away attention from the spirit of the Law itself. When Jesus appeals from letter to spirit his closest followers receive a shock. But the Master is resolute: every plant which his heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. The kingdom of heaven has sundered itself from the Tradition of the Elders: henceforward it is at war with the religion of the land.

But when, in the ninth section, we are again among the followers of Jesus, we see the advancing kingdom of heaven attain its foundation faith. Peter is the spokesman: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. This confession of Peter (*Petros*) is the rock (*petra*) on which the church is to stand. But at once it is added: —

> From that time began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

When Peter protests, he is repelled as a tempter, and the other side of the foundation faith is made clear: whoso would follow Christ must deny himself and take up his cross. Only when the claim of the Messiahship is united with the doctrine of the cross do we reach the Transfiguration, and Jesus is seen in his glory, the Law and Prophets doing him reverence.

The rest of this crowning section of St. Matthew's gospel is filled with questions of the kingdom thus fully revealed. Shall the kingdom of heaven pay toll to the kingdoms of the earth? But the toll is quietly paid, and a little child is set in the midst: as the child with his child world stands in the midst of men and women and their busy schemes, so is the kingdom of heaven among the systems of the world. The problem of sin and its forgiveness is raised; the parable of the Fellow-servants brings out how all that men can be asked to forgive to one another is but a trifle in comparison with what God has forgiven themselves. Questions of marriage and divorce reveal the spiritual nature of a kingdom independent of social institutions. The young lawyer brings the atmosphere of mammon: the parable of the Hired Labourers presents the paradox of a region in which economic laws have no place — the last shall be rewarded even as the first. Finally, the sons of Zebedee seek the honours of the kingdom; they learn that in the kingdom of heaven lordship is service.

The kingdom of heaven has attained its firm foundation: it may now encounter Jerusalem itself, seat of the world antagonism with which it is to do battle. To St. Matthew there is but one visit to Jerusalem: a royal entry amid thousands of the multitude, ending in a

Temple cleansed and made again a house of prayer. What follows is the final breach between Jesus and the ruling classes of his nation. The parable of the Two Sons is heard: the son who said, I go, and went not; the son who in word denied the summons, but whose heart was open to repentance. The parable of the Vineyard tells how the bidden guests held back, and how the marriage feast was for those fetched from the highways and the hedges. Isaiah's prophecies contain a sevenfold woe: it finds an echo in a sevenfold "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." At last is heard the final lament: —

> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

The public ministry of Jesus is ended; the eleventh section of the gospel contains the Master's last discourse to his followers, in which he is preparing them for the dread future, to be encountered after he has been taken from them. Mystic warnings stretch into a dim future; but the moral is clear: the duty of watchfulness, with its parable of the Virgins, the duty of work, set forth by the parable of the Talents. At the close of this vista into the future, the final parable of the Sheep and Goats reveals the end to the kingdom of heaven upon earth: the winnowing fan will have done its perfect work in a sundering of irreconcilable good and evil.

The last division of all the gospels must be the same: philosophical history will not differ from other histories in recording the passion and resurrection of Christ. Yet the closing words of St. Matthew are suggestive of the whole bent of his writing. Like St. Mark and St. Luke he brings Jesus and his disciples to the place of parting. But instead of telling, as do the other gospels, of a glorious ascension into heaven, Matthew is content with the final command to make disciples of all nations, and the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." To the last Matthew is the historian of the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

The Gospel of St. John as Wisdom Literature

The study of the fourth gospel, to be adequate, needs the assistance of works specially devoted to its exposition. All that is here attempted is to indicate in what sense St. John's work may be included in the wisdom literature of Scripture.

Every reader will feel the distinctiveness of the fourth gospel, not only from other wisdom literature, but even from the wisdom gospel of St. Matthew. But there is reason for this difference. Wisdom is the philosophy of the Hebrews. Now the Hebrew people came at last into contact with another people even more philosophically inclined than themselves. The mode of thought moreover that prevailed among the Greeks was altogether different from that which characterised the wise among the Hebrews. The two nations began to exercise mutual influence upon the thought of each. The gospel of St. John is Hebrew wisdom largely leavened by Greek modes of thought.

The distinctive character of Hebrew philosophy is its close relation with practical life: the 'wisdom' that pours itself out in practical proverbs and maxims. Greek philosophy also had its 'seven wise men,' and sayings of these are on record. But early in its career Greek philosophy turned from practical life to speculation. The genius of Socrates, it is true, brought it back from barren speculations in the field of natural science to questions of life and conduct. But even in the field of moral philosophy the powerful influence of Socrates encouraged the Greek mind to speculation. He stamped upon philosophy a special mode of thought, called by the technical name 'dialectics.' Though it is an imperfect explanation, it is sufficient for our present purpose to say that 'dialectics' is to dialogue what logic is to monologue. Modern philosophy tends to be the argument of a single thinker, its value depending upon the value of the conclusion that is reached. But where the influence of Socrates prevailed, Greek philosophy came to be discussion: often it is the conversation of several speakers, and where this is not so, it nevertheless takes the form of a thinker arguing with himself. It is no injustice to Greek philosophy of this kind to say that its interest lay, not so much in the conclusion, as in the discussion itself: the play of thought, cross lights reflected on to a topic from several minds.

Now when the fourth gospel is compared with the other three, it is precisely this characteristic of disputation which is found to distinguish the work of Christ, as St. John presents it. The life in Galilee, with its simple preaching and works of healing, is scarcely noticed in the fourth gospel; what attracts the mind of St. John is the spectacle of Jesus in Jerusalem amid the religious thinkers of his nation, who criticise every work, and resist every claim: the very term 'the Jews' is used by St. John as a name for the opponents of Christ. Hence it is not discourse we find here, but disputation. It is difficult to do justice to this statement without lengthy extracts.

> As he spake these things many believed on him. Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed him, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
>
> They answered unto him, 'We be Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?'
>
> Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you. I speak the things which I have seen with my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father."
>
> They answered and said unto him, 'Our Father is Abraham.'
>
> Jesus saith unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father."
>
> They said unto him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.'
>
> Jesus said unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

> When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God."
>
> The Jews answered and said unto him, 'Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?'
>
> Jesus answered, "I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me. But I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death."
>
> The Jews said unto him, 'Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?'
>
> Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God; and ye have not known him: but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know him, and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."
>
> The Jews therefore said unto him, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?'
>
> Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
>
> They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

Now, of course, disputation of this kind is vastly different from disputation as it appears in Plato; but so also is the life and work of Jesus infinitely different from the life and work of Socrates. And, in spite of all differences, the disputations of the fourth gospel are nearer to Plato than to the gnomic style of Old Testament wisdom.

This attraction in the mind of St. John to a dialectic style is so strong that we find it where we should least expect it. Even in the incidents of the life of Jesus what attracts St. John is the conflict of thought called forth at successive turns of events; so that a narrative, in the fourth gospel, comes to wear the air of a discussion. I instance the trial of Christ before Pilate.

> They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the palace: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.
>
> Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, ‘What accusation bring ye against this man?’
>
> They answered and said unto him, ‘If this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee.’
>
> Pilate therefore said unto them, ‘Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.’
>
> The Jews said unto him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put any man to death;’ that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die.
>
> Pilate therefore entered again into the palace, and called Jesus, and said unto him, ‘Art thou the King of the Jews?’
>
> Jesus answered, “Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?”
>
> Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?’
>
> Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”
>
> Pilate therefore said unto him, ‘Art thou a king then?’
>
> Jesus answered, “Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”
>
> Pilate saith unto him, ‘What is truth?’

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, 'I find no crime in him. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?'

They cried out therefore again, saying, 'Not this man, but Barabbas.' Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands.

And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, 'Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him.' Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, 'Behold, the man!'

When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, 'Crucify him, crucify him.'

Pilate saith unto them, 'Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him.'

The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.'

When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the palace again, and saith unto Jesus, 'Whence art thou?'

But Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate therefore saith unto him, 'Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?'

Jesus answered him, "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin."

Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgement-seat at a place called 'The Pavement,' but in the Hebrew 'Gabbatha.' Now it was

> the Preparation of the Passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, 'Behold your King!'
>
> They therefore cried out, 'Away with him, away with him, crucify him.'
>
> Pilate saith unto them, 'Shall I crucify your King?'
>
> The chief priests answered, 'We have no King but Cæsar.'
>
> Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

It is time to turn from the general style of this fourth gospel to the conception of the work as a whole. Here again we find a counterpart to wisdom literature, to that side of it which contemplates God's universe as a whole, or meditates upon foundation principles which underlie it. St. John's is a philosophical gospel: a prologue lays down a proposition of philosophy — in this case of theology — and what follows is the proof of the proposition.

The famous prologue to the fourth gospel is either a complex and difficult piece of writing, or a theory comparatively simple and straightforward, according to the point of view from which it is approached. All rests upon a certain expression, *Logos* in the original Greek, *Word* in the English version. The English term is a fair equivalent for the Greek, with this difference: that *Logos* in Greek, besides its ordinary usage, is also a technical term of certain oriental philosophies, involving subtle and intricate conceptions. Undoubtedly the author of the fourth gospel had in mind these oriental systems of thought, and the relations between their conceptions and the theology he himself believed. Those therefore who are concerned with the place of St. John's writing in the general history of philosophic thought are burdened with a difficult task, that of catching and formulating the relations between Christian and oriental philosophy. But where the question is only of the fourth gospel as a work of Christian literature, the prologue is comparatively simple. Both the original expression and the English translation 'Word' indicate what we in modern times should convey by using the term 'Revelation.' The argument is as to the relationship between 'Revelation' and Jesus Christ.

For the form of this prologue St. John has gone to wisdom literature; he has used that particular form we have so often had to notice as the 'maxim.' The maxim is a text in proverb form, with a brief prose comment. The prologue is made up of three such maxims: two of them are texts with comments, the third is the text on which the whole gospel is to serve as comment. The best way of grasping the argument of the prologue is to isolate the three texts, and view them as three steps in a progression of thought.

1

In the beginning was the Word:
And the Word was with God:
And the Word was God.

2

And the Word became Flesh,
And dwelt among us,
Full of grace and truth.

3

No man hath seen God at any time:
The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,
He hath declared Him.

The first proposition fastens attention upon the conception of a Revelation of God which is as Divine as the

God who is revealed. The second tells how in due course this Revelation took the form of human flesh. The two ideas of Divine Revelation and human flesh having thus been brought forward, the third proposition unites them in a third conception, Son: the incarnated Revelation of God is the Son revealing the Father. The full truth of the prologue is Jesus, Son of God, Revealer of the Father.

Comments expand and support the ideas of the first two propositions. The Revelation of God which was itself Divine was manifested in all creation, all life, in the spiritual light which no darkness could overcome. John was no more than a witness to the light that was coming. Though created beings might reject that which had created them, yet those who accepted could become themselves sons of God, begotten by that which was God.[1] To the idea of the Word becoming Flesh a comment, interjected (as elsewhere in wisdom writing[2]) into the middle of the text, makes the author one of many who could bear witness: "*We* beheld his glory." John's testimony is added. And further, previous revelation was the partial revelation of 'law'; with Jesus came the full glory of revelation in 'grace and truth.'[3]

On the third text, as I have already said, the whole gospel is the comment. Other gospels are made up of the Acts and Words of Jesus. In that of St. John the 'Acts' become 'Signs.' The ordinary words that express the miraculous works of Christ are almost wanting in the fourth gospel; the incidents are *signs*, selected and treated with a view to bring out the bearing of each on the Divine character of the Worker. Similarly, the words of Jesus which St. John relates are those which most clearly *witness* to his claims of Divinity. The thought of the prologue having been kept clear through every section of the narrative is once more formulated in its closing words: —

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[1] Chapter i. 2–13.

[2] See in *Matthew* volume of *Modern Reader's Bible*, page 214. Similar forms are in *Ecclesiastes* volume, pages 25, 37.

[3] i. 14–17.

> Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye may have life in his name.

CHAPTER VII

LYRIC POETRY OF THE BIBLE

Of creative literature the three natural divisions are Epic, Lyric, Drama. Epic poetry, illustrated by such works as *The Iliad* or *Paradise Lost*, is the poetry which relates or describes; it is the author who speaks throughout. In Drama, on the contrary, the author nowhere appears; it is the actual personages of the story who speak, and by their words and acts the incidents are presented. Between these two forms stands Lyric poetry as poetic meditation: the poet now speaks for himself, now identifies himself with other personages, or for a time is relating and describing. Lyric poetry is made up of songs, odes, sonnets, elegies, meditations, monologues; as the name implies, it lends itself readily to musical accompaniment, and even without this is in spirit closely akin to music.

Three main sources may be recognised for the lyric poetry of Scripture. The first of these is the dance. Before literature commits itself to writing there is a long and important period of spoken poetry, and in this spoken stage it is natural for poetry to associate itself alike with musical accompaniment and with bodily movement and gesticulation. Indeed, these external motions of the body may be looked upon as a sort of scaffolding, with the aid of which is being gradually built up a mental sense of rhythm; in process of time the dance movements, and even the musical accompaniment, drop away, and metrical rhythm is strong enough to stand by itself. But in the case of biblical literature, just where, by natural evolution, dance movement was falling into decay, another influence was encountered of an opposite tendency: an elaborate Temple service was instituted, and the processionary character of sacred ritual restored to later lyrics much of what the dance had contributed to poetry in its earliest stage. It is thus convenient to indicate three landmarks in the development of biblical lyrics. One is the Processionary Ode. The second is the Anthem, in which, without the full procession, there is some suggestion of elaborate performance, such (for example) as provision for two or more performers. There is, thirdly, the Song or Meditation, which is nothing more than the musical outpouring of a single performer.

Of the full processional ode the Bible contains two magnificent examples. One is the triumphal song put into the mouth of Israel in the moment of its deliverance at the Red Sea; here the text distinctly states how Miriam "took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances."[1] The structure of this Song of Moses and Miriam is very simple: the Men, in successive stanzas, celebrate the fact of the deliverance itself, the mystic manner in which it has been brought about, the panic falling upon all the foes who guard the approach to Canaan; between the stanzas the Women dance and sing the refrain: —

Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

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[1] *Exodus* xv. 20.

The other is the similar Song of Deborah in triumph over the fall of Sisera. We have already seen[1] how the performance of this is in the hands of a Chorus of Men, led by Barak, and a Chorus of Women, led by Deborah; how, in tumultuous ecstasy, the two choruses rouse one another to their task, interrupt one another with snatches of song, play into one another's hands in depicting different phases of the incident, unite finally in a climax of triumph. The two odes are supreme examples of early lyric poetry. And they can be fully appreciated only by reading them with the same antiphonal rendering with which they were originally performed.

As an interesting link connecting the processional ode with the anthems of Temple service we may study the Anthems for the Inauguration of Jerusalem.[2] It will be remembered that Jerusalem was originally a Jebusite city, deemed an impregnable fortress; its capture was the greatest achievement of David as a military man. He resolved to transform the heathen fortress into a metropolis for the sacred monarchy of Israel; by way of ceremonious inauguration he would convey to Jerusalem the ark, as symbol of Divine presence. But this enterprise at its outset received a tragic check. The ark had been discovered in the woodlands of Ephraim; drawn in a cart, it was being escorted with military pomp, when one of the attendants touched the ark as the oxen stumbled, and he fell dead. Pomp was converted into panic: the ark was hastily conveyed into the house of Obed-Edom by the roadside, and for three months

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[1] Above, page 3.

[2] For the general narrative of this incident, compare *II Samuel* vi with *I Chronicles* xiii and xv–xvi.

David laboured under a sense of the Divine displeasure. The death of Uzzah was interpreted as a judgment upon the neglect of the ceremonies ordained for the escort of the ark in the wilderness journeys. Accordingly, David reorganised a priestly and levitical service, and a second time set out to bring the ark to Jerusalem, with a procession in which priestly ritual and military pomp were to intermingle. In connection with this day of inauguration five anthems may be traced.

David entered upon the ceremonies of the day with trepidation of spirit. Hence, as soon as the Levites with the ark had moved forward six paces — enough to show that the Divine ban had been removed — the procession halted for a sacrifice of thanksgiving. At this point the anthem seems to have been the thirtieth psalm. It breathes a sense of sudden deliverance, the lifting of a weight of oppression.

For his anger is but for a moment;
  His favour is for a life time:
Weeping may tarry for the night,
  But joy cometh in the morning.

In no obscure terms comes the suggestion of the shock which, three months before, had clouded the hour of military triumph with sudden withdrawal of the Divine favour: —

As for me, I said in my prosperity,
I shall never be moved,
Thou, LORD, of thy favour hadst made my mountain to
  stand strong:

Thou didst hide thy face; I was troubled,
I cried to thee, O LORD;
And unto the LORD I made supplication.

There is a return to the sense of deliverance: —

> Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;
> Thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

At the foot of the hill on which Jerusalem stands the procession again halted to take breath. Here the anthem was the first half of the twenty-fourth psalm. The choir divides: one choir raises a note of praise to God, and adds the question: —

> Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?
> And who shall stand in his holy place?

Pausing at the foot of the hill, which this day's ceremony is to make the hill of Jehovah, it is natural to ask reverently, Who is fitted to take part in so solemn an act? The answer from the second choir is a description of spiritual preparedness of heart, and an assumption of it for themselves.

> He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
>   Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
>   And hath not sworn deceitfully.
> He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
>   And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
> This is the generation of them that seek after him,
>   That seek thy face, O God of Jacob.

The procession resumed; and the climax of the day's ceremony was reached in front of the closed gates of the ancient fortress. One of the two choirs had passed within, to appear as wardens of Jerusalem. The other choir, with king and army, approach and call upon the city to receive its conqueror.

> *First Choir.* Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
>   And be ye lift up, ye ancient doors:
>   And the King of Glory shall come in.

Choir of Wardens. Who is the King of Glory?

First Choir. The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.

But the gates refuse to open; for in the response of the advancing procession the supreme name of Israel's God — the military name, The LORD of Hosts, which serves as watchword for this military ceremony — has been purposely avoided, in order to make it the more emphatic when it does come. The summons has to be repeated.

First Choir. Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye ancient doors;
And the King of Glory shall come in.

Choir of Wardens. Who is this King of Glory?

At last the watchword of the day is thundered forth by choir and army: —

The LORD of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory!

The ancient gates roll back, the ark enters, and Jehovah has taken possession of his city.

But the proceedings of the day were not yet at an end. A temporary tabernacle had been prepared for the ark, until the enduring Temple could be built. As the procession deposits its sacred burden another sacrifice is offered, and with it, as anthem, comes a portion of the hundred and thirty-second psalm.[1] It pictures all the affliction of David during his three months of anxiety: —

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[1] The latter part of the psalm (from verse 10) is an addition for the occasion when the ark was transferred from the tabernacle of David to the Temple of Solomon.

> Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;
> I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids;
> Until I find out a place for the LORD,
> A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob.

Allusion is made to the search for the ark, its discovery in "the field of the wood" — a translation of the name of the place from which the original procession started. Finally, there is an echo of the formula used at the stopping of the ark in its wilderness journeys: —

> Arise, O LORD, into thy resting place;
> Thou, and the ark of thy strength.

The main ceremony of the day was thus concluded, and the people as a whole were dismissed with the royal blessing. But the king and his immediate followers proceeded to a lesser ceremony of inaugurating the royal palace. This gives the final anthem of the day, the hundred and first psalm. It is a song of mercy and judgment; vows of purity made by the king for himself, for his immediate circle, and for the administration of justice. The matter is suitable for every righteous ruler; but there is a special appropriateness in the final lines: —

> Morning by morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land;
> To cut off all the workers of iniquity from the city of the LORD.

The expression, "The city of the LORD," occurs nowhere else in Scripture but in connection with this, the day of the city's inauguration.

The anthems of Temple service include all the more elaborate ascriptions of praise to God of which the psalter is full. They breathe the joyous spirit of a sacred feast day, or express vows of thanksgivin

They especially abound towards the end of *The Book of Psalms*, where, to a general refrain of 'Hallelujah,' psalm after psalm calls upon the heights and the depths, all orders of nature and all classes of men, with all instruments of music and everything that hath breath, to join in praising Jehovah. Perhaps the point where the ritual anthem most nearly resembles the original processionary ode is found in the hundred and eighteenth psalm. The occasion is clearly a vow of thanksgiving after recovery from sickness; the performance involves the Worshipper himself, a Chorus of People escorting him, and later on a Chorus of Priests. The Worshipper (or his musical representative) approaches the Temple; he and his escort sing alternately or together.

Worshipper and Chorus. O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good:
For his mercy endureth for ever.
Let Israel now say,
That his mercy endureth for ever.
Let the house of Aaron now say,
That his mercy endureth for ever.
Let them now that fear the LORD say,
That his mercy endureth for ever.

Worshipper. Out of my distress I called upon the LORD:
The LORD answered me, and set me in a large place.
The LORD is on my side; I will not fear:
What can man do unto me?
The LORD is on my side among them that help me:
Therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.

Chorus. It is better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in princes.

Worshipper. All nations compassed me about —

Chorus. In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.

Worshipper. They compassed me about;
Yea, they compassed me about —

Chorus. In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.

Worshipper. They compassed me about like bees;
They are quenched as the fire of thorns —

Chorus. In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.

Worshipper. Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall:
But the LORD helped me:
The LORD is my strength and song;
And he is become my salvation.
The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous,
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

Chorus. The right hand of the LORD is exalted,
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

Worshipper. I shall not die, but live,
And declare the works of the LORD.
The LORD hath chastened me sore:
But he hath not given me over unto death.
Open to me the gates of righteousness:
I will enter into them, I will give thanks unto the LORD.

At this moment the Temple gates open and disclose a Chorus of Priests awaiting the procession.

Priests. This is the gate of the LORD;
The righteous shall enter into it.

Worshipper. I will give thanks unto thee, for thou hast answered me,
And art become my salvation.
The stone which the builders rejected
Is become the head of the corner.

Chorus. This is the LORD's doing;
It is marvellous in our eyes.
This is the day which the LORD hath made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.
Save now, we beseech thee, O LORD,
O LORD, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.

Here all enter the Temple, the Priests giving their benediction.

Priests. Blessed be he that entereth in the name of the LORD.
We have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

Chorus. The LORD is God, and he hath given us light:
Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

Worshipper. Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee:
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

Chorus. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good:
For his mercy endureth for ever.

Before passing away from the anthem it is well to note a group of psalms in which the animating spirit is not sacred ritual, but patriotic celebration: they are national anthems. They are however very different from what that term suggests in modern literature. Most peoples are constituted nations by circumstances of race or geography; Israel becomes the chosen nation by a providential call, and its national anthems take the form of historical retrospects. The earliest is the National Anthem of the Wilderness, the hundred and thirty-sixth psalm. It has the structure of primitive poetry: the latter half of each verse is the refrain, "For his mercy endureth for ever." The history surveyed is the smiting of Egypt, and the deliverance of Israel with a strong hand and a stretched out arm; the dividing of the Red Sea, and the leading through the wilderness; the furthest point reached is the smiting of great kings, Sihon of the Amorites and Og of Bashan, and the inheriting of their land by Israel. The hundred and fifth psalm is the National Hymn of the Promised Land. Its unbroken couplets ring like the march of a conquering people. The main theme is the covenant made with the fathers, and now fulfilled: —

Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,
  The lot of your inheritance:
When they were but a few men in number;
  Yea, very few, and sojourners in it;
And they went about from nation to nation,
  From one kingdom to another people.
He suffered no man to do them wrong;
  Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;
"Touch not mine anointed ones,
  And do my prophets no harm."

The wonders of Egypt and the mercies of the wilderness are passed in review, and the joyous conclusion is reached: —

And he brought forth his people with joy,
  And his chosen with singing.
And he gave them the lands of the nations;
  And they took the labour of the peoples in possession.

Very different is the seventy-eighth psalm: this powerful lyric is the National Hymn of the Kingdom of Judah. The defection of northern Israel (or Ephraim) is put under the metaphor of armed warriors deserting on the very field of battle: —

> The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows,
> Turned back in the day of battle.
> They kept not the covenant of God,
> And refused to walk in his law.

From this point the long poem follows the peculiar *pendulum movement* so characteristic of Hebrew poetry: the swinging backwards and forwards between two themes, in this case between the wonders of Divine energy on behalf of Israel, and the dead weight of human frailty which has persisted in frustrating the designs of God. When this unfaithfulness of Israel even in the promised land itself has been described, there is a final outburst of Divine energy in a new call, by which Israel is rejected, and Judah becomes the chosen of God.

> Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep,
> Like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.
> And he smote his adversaries backward:
> He put them to a perpetual reproach.
> Moreover he refused the tent of Joseph,
> And chose not the tribe of Ephraim;
> But chose the tribe of Judah,
> The mount Zion which he loved.

The hundred and sixth psalm gives us the same general matter, and the same pendulum movement: but the history is carried a stage further — it is the National Anthem of the Captivity.

> Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people,
> And he abhorred his inheritance.
> And he gave them into the hand of the nations;
> And they that hated them ruled over them. . . .

Save us, O Lord our God,
  And gather us from among the nations,
To give thanks unto thy holy name,
  And to triumph in thy praise.

These make the four national anthems of Israel. But it is interesting to note that the poem which in the psalter immediately follows the last of these is the Song of the Lord's Redeemed: —

Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the adversary,
And gathered them out of the lands,
From the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

In passages already quoted in full,[1] as examples of rhythmic beauty, we have the captivity of Israel suggested under four images: of wanderers in the desert hungry and fainting, of men bound in iron and darkness, of fools brought by affliction to the gates of death, of men going down to the sea in ships and staggering amid the storm — all cry to Jehovah, and are heard praising him for sudden relief. With a change of rhythmic effect, the stanzas swell out and die down to picture the providence that exalts the righteous and depresses the sinner. The end of it all is 'wisdom': —

Whoso is wise shall give heed to these things,
And they shall consider the mercies of the Lord.

The songs and meditations of the psalter are a treasury of the richest gems in lyric poetry.[2] They celebrate such themes as the providence of God, exhibited in the salvation of the individual or the nation, or in the Divine judgment between the righteous and wicked. They give expression to the spirit of trust, or consecration; to every aspect of the devout life. Poetry so familiar calls for little discussion; it seems almost invidious to make selection. I will, however, dwell upon one topic, which not only has called forth much poetry, but also has served as a centre around which songs have drawn together into a cluster — a psalter within the psalter. Immediately following the hundred and nineteenth psalm fifteen poems are found with the common heading, "A Song of Ascents." In modern phrase this series of poems might be styled, "The Pilgrim's Hymnbook." But those who are responsible for the arrangement of *The Book of Psalms* have, by a felicitous stroke of literary art, brought together two very different conceptions of pilgrimage. One is of pilgrimages to the sacred feasts, which formed so picturesque a feature of Hebrew religion: sacred picnics, in which pious Israelites from all over the holy land, whole families together, journeyed in ever increasing throngs towards their goal, Jerusalem. But a very different experience of Israel may be described by the word 'pilgrimage' — the toilsome march of the delivered captives across the dreary desert back to their sacred country. Both these types of pilgrim experience are found to underlie the "Songs of the goings up." And if the fifteen psalms are read in a particular order, they will successively unfold a complete drama of pilgrimage in the extended sense of the word.

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[1] Above, page 128.

[2] For illustrations and references see in the Appendix.

We begin with a cry out of the depths.[1]

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[1] Psalm cxxx.

If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities,
O Lord, who shall stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

It is captive Israel that is thus pleading for plenteous redemption from all his iniquities. The attitude is that of waiting, looking, hoping.

I wait for the LORD,
My soul doth wait,
And in his word do I hope.
My soul looketh for the Lord,
More than watchmen look for the morning;
Yea, more than watchmen for the morning.

In this darkest hour before the dawn the only solace[1] is the thought of Israel's past — how many a time the foes have afflicted him, the ploughers making long their furrows, yet have not finally prevailed. Or there is relief in an outpouring of hate for those who have turned backward from the nation in its humiliation; they are cursed with the curse of the grass upon the housetops, cut off from the joy of the harvest to come, and withering before it can grow up. Side by side with such affliction of the nation there is the sad experience of the individual exile,[2] sojourning in Meshech, dwelling among the tents of Kedar; all around are the "lying lips," "deceitful tongue," of the hateful foreign speech, perpetual reminder of exile, bitter as sharp arrows or stinging smoke. Like the crowds of slaves, in these lands of foreign tyranny,[3] obsequiously watching the slightest signal of some harsh master or mistress, so exiled Israel, with anxious strain, eyes the finger of providence for the first sign of mercy. And at last the mercy comes.[4]

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[1] Psalm cxxix. [2] Psalm cxx. [3] Psalm cxxiii. [4] Psalm cxxvi.

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion,
We were like unto them that dream.
  Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
  And our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the nations,
The LORD hath done great things for them,
  The LORD hath done great things for us;
  Whereof we are glad.

Laughter and tears meet in this first song of deliverance: we are at the standpoint of those exiles who have rejoiced to watch the first bands of captives setting out for the holy land, while they themselves must be content to wait for their own mercies: they have seen the seed time and hope for the full harvest.

Turn again our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.
  They that sow in tears
  Shall reap in joy.
Though he goeth on his way weeping,
Bearing forth the seed;
  He shall come again with joy,
  Bringing his sheaves with him.

Then another song,[1] and deliverance is complete: —

Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
The snare is broken, and we are escaped.

At this point the one conception of pilgrimage begins to pass into the other: alike for those who journey across the desert to the holy land, and for those who travel along the rocky ways of Palestine towards Jerusalem, the supreme thought is the Divine protection by the way.[2]

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[1] Psalm cxxiv.

[2] Psalm cxxi.

> I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
> From whence shall my help come?
> My help cometh from the LORD,
> Which made heaven and earth.
>
> He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
> He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
> Behold, he that keepeth Israel
> Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
>
> The LORD is thy keeper:
> The LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.
> The sun shall not smite thee by day,
> Nor the moon by night.

The concourse of pilgrims was made up of whole families blended together; we remember how the boy Jesus was lost from such a company, and for a whole day not missed. Hence it is not surprising that three hymns in the Pilgrim's Hymnbook are family songs.[1] One contrasts the two sides of life: the life of work, that rises early, and takes rest late, eating the bread of toil; and the home life, with its quiet sleep and family growing up to be a strength to parents. Another celebrates the undistinguished lot of happy obscurity: the joy of eating what the labour of the hands has provided, the wife as a fruitful vine with children all around as olive plants, the patriotic sympathy with a prospering Jerusalem. For a third family song, the babes that are being carried in the arms suggest the ideal of a quiet soul.

> LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty;
> Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
> Or in things too wonderful for me.

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[1] Psalms cxxvii, cxxviii, cxxxi.

Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul;
Like a weaned child with his mother,
My soul is with me like a weaned child.

The point of the pilgrimage has now been reached at which is caught the first glimpse of the sacred city amid its mountain fastnesses: there is a moral suggestiveness in this which breaks into song.[1]

They that trust in the LORD are as mount Zion,
  Which cannot be moved,
  But abideth for ever.
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
  So the LORD is round about his people,
  From this time forth and for evermore.

In another song the city has been attained.[2]

Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem,
Jerusalem, that art builded as a city that is compact together:
Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD. . . .
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
They shall prosper that love thee.

The concourse in one spot of pilgrims from all over the land gives emphasis to the unity of the nation.[3]

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

The link of patriotism is sweet as the fragrant ointment on the high priest's head; the multitudes that are joined in brotherhood are numerous as dewdrops — the dew of Hermon, and other most distant portions of the holy land, all descending on the hill of Zion. The pilgrims take their part in the sacred festivals, and we have the historic hymn of Temple Dedication:[4] the original welcome of the ark into the tabernacle of David, with an addition made for the inauguration of the permanent Temple: —

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[1] Psalm cxxv. [2] Psalm cxxii. [3] Psalm cxxxiii. [4] Psalm cxxxii.

For the LORD hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired it for his habitation.
"This is my resting place for ever:
Here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

There remains only the departure from the Temple:[1] the greeting spoken to the Night Watch as the Congregation retires, —

Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD,
Which by night stand in the house of the LORD:
Lift up your hands to the sanctuary,
And bless ye the LORD. —

with the answer of the Night Watch,—

The LORD bless thee out of Zion;
Even he that made heaven and earth.

These are the fifteen songs of the Pilgrim's Hymnbook. But outside this group is to be found the most famous of the psalms which are inspired by the pilgrimages to Jerusalem.[2]

How lovely are thy tabernacles, O LORD of Hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.

By a most exquisite image the singer compares himself to a sparrow finding herself a house, and a swallow a nest where she may lay her young: just as the mystic force of spring stirs the birds to find their nesting-places, so the recurrence of the sacred festivals rouses the worshipper to a yearning after his soul's home by the altars of his God. Happiest they who may dwell always in the house of God; next happy, the devout pilgrim — the way to Zion runs through his heart. Like desert places flushed into greenness by a brief season of rain, so the rocky ways of Palestine are alive at the festival season with thronging pilgrims: they go from strength to strength, from one rocky eminence to another, until all appear before God, and sing together their pilgrims' hymn. A day in the sacred festivals is more than a thousand of worldly rejoicings.

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[1] Psalm cxxxiv.

[2] Psalm lxxxiv.

I have spoken of the dance as one of three sources for lyric poetry. A second is closely akin — the wail, or dirge. Originally, this is simply the particular dance used in funeral ceremonies; where lyric poetry in general is passing from spoken to written style the wail is retained in its earlier form by the influence of the professional mourners, who are called in to give expression to the sorrow of bereavement. The representative of the dirge in later literature is the elegy, which, with or without its peculiar 'elegiac rhythm,' is a marked type of lyric poetry. Among famous elegies is that of David over Saul and Jonathan,[1] with its plaintive refrain, —

How are the mighty — fallen!

Another is the psalm[2] which is founded on the vine, as the national emblem of Israel, and describes this vine as broken down and ravaged by beasts of the field. Most famous of all are the series of five Lamentations over Fallen Jerusalem, ascribed to the prophet Jeremiah. It is impossible to speak here of the most remarkable feature of these lamentations — the intricacy of their rhythmic and acrostic structure — since these are but faintly represented in current translations of Scripture. In matter, these elegies make a half dramatic picture of desolation, with voices — of Jerusalem, of the Mourning People, of the Prophet who shares his city's woe — lengthening out a wail of misery: —

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[1] II *Samuel* i.

[2] Psalm lxxx.

Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by?

There is just a single note of hope: —

It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.
They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.
The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

There is a third source for lyric poetry. Hebrew literature, we have seen, rests its verse system, not on metre or rhyme, but on the parallelism of clauses. But parallelism of clauses is a thing which, in all languages, belongs to oratory and other exalted prose. It is thus a peculiar distinction of Hebrew that it can make smooth and rapid transitions between prose and verse, and — since form is a reflection of spirit — between the type of thought which belongs to prose and the type of thought which is essentially poetic. When Lamech is suddenly conscious of the deadly power of the weapons he has invented,[1] when Noah is moved to curse or Isaac to bless his sons,[2] when Balaam at the sight of Israel feels a rush of prophetic inspiration[3] — in all these cases the prose narrative is seen to break into verse. Thus spontaneous elevation of discourse becomes a natural origin of lyric poetry. In a great collection like *The Book of Psalms* it is obviously impossible to refer each particular poem to its ultimate source; but, speaking generally, it is safe to connect with this third class of lyrics the monologues of the psalter, poems in which a speaker is heard to offer prayer, or express penitence, or relate his experience.

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[1] *Genesis* iv. 23.

[2] *Genesis* ix. 25; xxvii. 27.

[3] *Numbers* xxiii. 7, etc.

In this connection there arises an important question of interpretation. Who are the speakers in these lyric monologues of Scripture?

> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Of whom are we to think as the 'I,' thus claiming Divine protection? The earlier interpretations, that took little note either of historic or literary discriminations, supposed David the speaker throughout almost every psalm, and searched the circumstances of David's life in order to find an historic fitting for particular poems. A reaction from this extreme has tended to discredit the idea of personal speakers in the psalms, and substitute the nationality of Israel. I would suggest that only in a few cases is either of these modes of interpretation justified. The eighteenth psalm has in its last verse the name of David like a signature, and the historical books cite this poem at length as an expression of thanksgiving for David's victorious career. We have seen how several of the songs of ascents expressly speak in the name of Israel. In the familiar fifty-first psalm, which opens with the words, —

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-
kindness;
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot
out my transgressions.—

the body of the poem is unmistakably the outpouring of an individual heart labouring under a sense of sin, while a postscript serves to generalise the whole and adapt it to national penitence:—

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:
Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
Then shalt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness,
in burnt offering and whole burnt offering:
Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

But in the great majority of cases it is a sounder, and far more literary interpretation, to understand the speaker of a monologue as an ideal personage, and the circumstances pourtrayed as purely general. To take an example. The twenty-second psalm opens thus:—

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The question is, Who is the despairing speaker, and what is his trouble? If we examine the details of the poem with a view to particularise the circumstances we find conflicting suggestions.

O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou answerest not;
And in the night season, and am not silent.

This by itself would convey the idea of spiritual trouble

All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head.

This would fit better with some public shame.

Many bulls have compassed me:
  Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
They gape upon me with their mouth,
  As a ravening and a roaring lion.

These lines, whether read literally or metaphorically, can only imply external foes; but the very next lines are equally clear in suggesting internal pain: —

I am poured out like water,
  And all my bones are out of joint.
My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.
  My strength is dried up like a potsherd;
And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
  And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

Immediately there is a transition to the idea of external foes: —

For dogs have compassed me:
  The assembly of evil-doers have inclosed me;
  They pierced my hands and my feet: —

back again to that of bodily suffering: —

I may tell all my bones:
  They look and stare upon me: —

yet again back to external foes: —

They part my garments among them,
  And upon my vesture do they cast lots.

If we seek to construct an historical incident out of such varied and conflicting suggestions interpretation must descend to the level of puzzle-guessing. Poetic sympathy, on the other hand, will see at once in the details of the psalm, not actual facts, but metaphorical representations of trouble in all its varied aspects: situations of despair are idealised in a common picture, and in ideal treatment salvation from on high is presented.

Devotion gains as much as poetry from this freer interpretation. The historical allusions, which so generally have been searched for by commentators, even if they could be established, would be so much limitation upon the wide applicability of the poem. The ideal, on the contrary, is realism universalised; and where the poetic is substituted for the historic interpretation every reader may become himself the hero of what he reads.

The monologues of the psalter may be dramatic, where the words of a speaker present an experience as actually going on, and in addition a change of circumstances is presented within the poem itself, from trouble to deliverance. Such combination of a personal speaker with dramatic movement may make a brief psalm a complete drama in miniature. One out of many examples[1] is the fifty-seventh psalm.

> Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me;
> For my soul taketh refuge in thee:
> Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I take refuge,
> Until these calamities be overpast. . . .
> My soul is among lions;
> I lie among them that are set on fire,
> Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,
> And their tongue a sharp sword. . . .
> They have prepared a net for my steps;
> My soul is bowed down:
> They have digged a pit before me —

Up to this point, it is clear, we have a picture of a sufferer in the midst of his suffering; suddenly, it appears, the deliverance has come, and the psalm changes wholly to triumph and thanksgiving: —

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[1] Here (as always) examples are collected together in the Appendix.

They have digged a pit before me —
They are fallen into the midst thereof themselves!
My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.
I will sing, yea, I will sing praises.
Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp:
I myself will awake right early.
I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the peoples:
I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

An interesting example of this type is the third psalm, where the change of circumstances is between the depression natural to the close of a day, and the fresh vigour of morning; the brief lyric is a miniature drama in two scenes.

Night

LORD, how are mine adversaries increased
  Many are they that rise up against me.
Many there be which say of my soul,
  There is no help for him in God.
But thou, O LORD, art a shield about me;
  My glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
I cry unto the LORD with my voice,
  And he answereth me out of his holy hill.

Morning

I laid me down and slept;
  I awaked; for the LORD sustaineth me.
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people,
  That have set themselves against me round about:
Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God:
  For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone;
  Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked.
Salvation belongeth unto the LORD;
  Thy blessing be upon thy people.

Or the dramatic movement may be wholly within the realm of the spiritual. This is the case with the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm. At the outset the singer is oppressed with the weight of Divine omniscience and omnipresence.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before,
And laid thine hand upon me.

The movement of the thought begins as the speaker seeks to escape from this besetting Divinity — in vain: the presence he would elude fills alike heaven above and the abyss beneath; before its piercing gaze darkness and light are alike. The encircling providence has extended backward through life to the womb itself. But it is just here — where the climax has been attained — that the current of thought begins to flow back: the watchfulness that encircled the helpless babe seems a mercy and not a terror.

I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
Wonderful are thy works;
And that my soul knoweth right well.
My frame was not hidden from thee,
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance,
And in thy book were all my members written,
Which day by day were fashioned,
When as yet there was none of them.

The new train of feeling gathers force, until the never ceasing thoughtfulness of God for his creature brings only comfort. It gathers yet greater force in a sudden burst of purity.

> Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:
>   Depart from me therefore, ye bloodthirsty men. . . .
> Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?
>   And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
> I hate them with perfect hatred:
>   I count them mine enemies.

The final climax is found in a reversal of the opening thought.

> Search me, O God, and know my heart:
>   Try me, and know my thoughts:
> And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,
>   And lead me in the way everlasting.

Other psalms may be dramatic, not so much by their movement, as through their vivid presentation of a single scene. The fiftieth psalm is a Vision of Judgment. At the outset the whole earth, from the rising to the setting of the sun, has been summoned before the bar of God; throughout the prelude the saints are preparing for the desired, yet dreadful, ordeal.

> Our God cometh, and shall not keep silence:
> A fire devoureth before him,
> And it is very tempestuous round about him.

The body of the poem is made up of the addresses of Jehovah, exactly symmetrical in structure, to the righteous and the wicked thus gathered before him, exalting the thoughts of the one to a higher conception of worship, refusing from the wicked a homage divorced from right living. The double thought is gathered up in the concluding couplet:—

Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me;
And to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the
salvation of God.

There is one peculiar type of lyric poem in *The Book of Psalms* which seems to combine the lyric monologue with the anthem previously described. The twenty-seventh psalm, at its outset, is a celebration of providential mercies in the manner of a ritual anthem; later on — as one mode of emphasising the theme — there is dramatic presentation of the trouble and deliverance which is calling forth the song of thanksgiving. Thus the opening lines of the poem are crowded with images of Divine succour in moments of dire extremity.

The Lord is my light and my salvation:
  Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life;
  Of whom shall I be afraid?
When evil-doers came upon me
  To eat up my flesh,
Even mine adversaries and my foes,
  They stumbled and fell.
Though an host should encamp against me,
  My heart shall not fear:
Though war should rise against me,
  Even then will I be confident.

This portion of the psalm finds a climax in aspiration after a life-long abode in the house of God, as a pavilion of security and a scene of joyous worship. In the very next line the speaker is heard pleading for succour as if from the depths of woe.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice:
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
"Seek ye my face —"

> My heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.
> Hide not thy face from me;
> Put not thy servant away in anger.

All this is no more than the dramatisation of the trouble, salvation from which has just been celebrated: how dramatic the treatment is may be seen in the sudden return to the tone of rejoicing at the conclusion of the psalm.

> I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
> Wait on the Lord: be strong, and let thine heart take courage;
> Yea, wait thou on the Lord.

In this way a dramatic monologue has been made a part of a ritual anthem.

Before closing this chapter it is proper to speak of a considerable poem outside *The Book of Psalms*. This is *The Song of Songs*, commonly known as *Solomon's Song*. The literary description of this poem is lyric idyl.[1] The term 'idyl' has been appropriated to what, in poetic tradition, have been considered the 'trifles' of life — love and domestic scenes, as distinguished from war and heroic deeds. Thus *The Book of Ruth* is a story idyl. In the present case the story is not narrated, as in *Ruth*, nor is it presented continuously, as in a drama; but different parts of the story appear before us in disconnected meditations, each meditation having for the most part the form of dramatic dialogue. Told connectedly, the story underlying *The Song of Songs* would stand thus. King Solomon with his court are visiting the royal vineyards upon Mount Lebanon, and come by surprise upon a fair Shulammite maiden, sister of the keepers of the vineyard. The maiden is embarrassed and flees. Solomon, smitten with her beauty, woos her in the disguise of a simple shepherd, and wins her love. He then appears in his royal state, and invites her to become his queen. The two are married in the royal palace. In the order of the poem itself the successive idyls commence with the wedding, go back in time to the courtship, and then go forward to what, in modern phrase, we may call the close of the honeymoon.

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[1] The view here followed is not the usual interpretation. The poem is generally interpreted as a drama, and the resulting story is quite different. The question is fully discussed in my *Literary Study of the Bible*, Chapter VIII, or in the *Biblical Idyls* volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible*.

The first of the seven idyls presents The Wedding Day. The procession is approaching the palace: Solomon leads the Bride, who is followed by a Chorus of Daughters of Jerusalem — in modern phrase, the Bridesmaids.

The Bride. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:
For thy love is better than wine.
Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance;
Thy name is as ointment poured forth:
Therefore do the virgins love thee.

A pause is made for the central point of the wedding ceremony, the lifting of the Bride over the threshold.

The Bride (to the Bridegroom). Draw me —
The Bridesmaids. We will run after thee —
The Bride. The king hath brought me into his chambers —
The Bridesmaids. We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
We will make mention of thy love more than of wine.
The Bride. In uprightness do they love thee.

The scene changes to the inside of the palace. The Bride, as a sunburnt beauty from the country, apologises for her rustic appearance to the paler city girls.

> Look not upon me, because I am swarthy,
> Because the sun hath scorched me.
> My mother's sons were incensed against me,
> They made me keeper of the vineyards,
> But mine own vineyard have I not kept!

Next follow whisperings between Bride and Bridegroom — reminiscences of the fond puzzle of that wooing, when she would seek to penetrate the mystery of the shepherd lover, and he would put aside her questions with explanations that explained nothing.

> *She.* Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,
> Where thou feedest thy flock,
> Where thou makest it to rest at noon:
> For why should I be as one that wandereth
> Beside the flocks of thy companions?
> *He.* If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,
> Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
> And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

The rest of the first idyl follows the procession from banquet hall to bridal chamber, with its exchanges of endearing speeches.

> *She.* I am a rose of Sharon [i.e. *of the lowly plain*],
> A lily of the valleys.
> *He.* As a lily among thorns,
> So is my love among the daughters.
> *She.* As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
> So is my beloved among the sons.

When the chamber has been reached the close of the first idyl is marked by one of the *Refrains*, such as are repeated at all the dividing points of the poem. These passages are not spoken by the parties to the story, but are conventional verses, used in all poetry of this type, like instrumental symphonies between the verses of a song, just to divide and to keep up the amatory spirit of the whole poem. The refrain in this first case is the conventional cry to leave lovers to their repose.

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
  By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
  Until it please.

The second idyl is made up of the Bride's reminiscences of the courtship: how her lover came to her rustic home, and his sweet voice was heard amid the sweetness of the Spring scene.

"For, lo, the winter is past,
  The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
  The time of the singing of birds is come,
  And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Suddenly rough voices jarred upon this sweetness — her brothers crying that the foxes had broken into the vineyard, —

"Take us the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vineyards;
  For our vineyards are in blossom."

Another reminiscence is that of a happy dream.

By night, on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth:
  I sought him, but I found him not.
I said, I will rise now, and go about the city,
  In the streets and in the broad ways,

I will seek him whom my soul loveth:
  I sought him, but I found him not.
The watchmen that go about the city found me:
  To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?
It was but a little that I passed from them,
  When I found him whom my soul loveth:
  I held him, and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
  And into the chamber of her that conceived me.

As a dividing point between these two reminiscences another conventional refrain has been used.

My beloved is mine, and I am his:
  He feedeth his flock among the lilies.
Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart
  Upon the mountains of separation.

The third idyl brings before us the Day of Betrothal, when Solomon, who had wooed as a humble shepherd, goes as a king to claim his love for his queen.

Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness
  Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
  With all powders of the merchant?
Behold, it is the litter of Solomon;
  Threescore mighty men are about it,
Of the mighty men of Israel.
  They all handle the sword, and are expert in war:
Every man hath his sword upon his thigh,
  Because of fear in the night.

After further elaborate lyric picturing of the royal procession the idyl becomes dramatic dialogue; here the actual proposal of marriage is reached, veiled in symbolic language.

Solomon. Come with me from Lebanon, my bride . . .
A garden shut up is my sister, my bride;
A spring shut up,
A fountain sealed. . . .
The Shulammite. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south:
Blow upon my garden,
That the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his precious fruits.

The fourth idyl is a troubled dream of the Bride, contrasting with the happy dream of the second song. Her lover has come in the same manner to her home, but by night.

"Open to me,
My sister, my love,
My dove, my undefiled:
For my head is filled with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night."

While the Shulammite (in her dream) was pausing a moment to array herself, and dip her fingers in the myrrh, the lover was gone. She wanders out in vain to find him; again she meets the watchmen, but they smite her and take away her veil. With the beautiful confusion of dream movement she finds herself accosting the Bridesmaids of the first song.

The Bride. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If ye find my beloved,
That ye tell him, that I am sick of love.
The Bridesmaids. What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
O thou fairest among women,
What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
That thou dost so adjure us?

As she answers the challenge, and extols her lover's perfections, the whole spirit of the dream changes, and the fourth idyl ends with the happy refrain: —

I am my beloved's,
And my beloved is mine:
  He feedeth his flock among the lilies.

In the fifth idyl we have the king meditating on his Bride. For the most part it is a passionate catalogue of bodily charms. But at one point the song glides into a reminiscence of that which is the foundation of the whole story — the first meeting of the lovers in the vineyards of Lebanon. A few lines convey the surprise of king and courtiers at the vision of stately beauty so unexpectedly facing them under the apple trees.

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon, pure as the sun,
  Terrible as an army with banners?

As if it were a dialogue of reminiscences, the Shulammite's side of the mutual surprise finds expression.

I went down into the garden of nuts,
  To see the green plants of the valley,
To see whether the vine budded,
  And the pomegranates were in flower.
Or ever I was aware, my soul set me
  Among the chariots of my princely people.

As the maiden fled (the king remembers) the court broke into a murmur of remonstrance.

Return, return, O Shulammite;
  Return, return, that we may look upon thee.

The Shulammite's embarrassment under this gaze follows.

Why will ye look upon the Shulammite;
As upon the dance of Mahanaim?

Such was the first shock of love, now developed into the raptures of married life, with which the fifth song is filled.

The last two idyls carry us forward in time. The Bride, wearied of a royal palace, has a longing to renew the mutual love in the very spot where first it was pledged. Accordingly, we have another journeying through the wilderness — not now a royal cortège, but the Bride on the arm of her beloved — and a renewal of the meeting in the vineyard of Lebanon, the old home of the Shulammite.

Solomon. Under the apple tree I awakened thee:
There thy mother was in travail with thee,
There was she in travail that brought thee forth.
The Bride. Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
As a seal upon thine arm:
For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave.

Such prattle as lovers use follows. Especially pretty is the conceit with which the Bride expresses once more the surrender of her heart, a conceit founded on the circumstance that her husband is (in modern phrase) the 'landlord' of this home of herself and her brothers.

Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon;
He let out the vineyard unto keepers;
Everyone for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand
pieces of silver.

My vineyard, which is mine, is before me:
Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand,
And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

In other words, Solomon is the owner of her heart: the people of this her home have been but temporary tenants. Sounds are heard of the escort approaching, and with a final embrace the poem concludes.

A modern reader of *Solomon's Song* is apt to feel some surprise at the warmth of the amatory language in which the poem abounds, and the way in which, apparently without reserve, the two lovers dwell upon each other's bodily charms. No doubt the East is more passionate than the sober West. But, in part, this first impression of the poem is due to a literary difference between English and Oriental: the use in the poetry of the East of symbolism. Imagery paints pictures that appeal to the imagination; in symbolic poetry the meaning is conveyed without any details on which the imagination can work. Notwithstanding the descriptions in *The Song of Songs* we do not know what the lovers were like. In one line the hero's locks are pronounced to be of most fine gold, in the next, we read of locks bushy and black as a raven. The heroine's eyes are exalted by being compared to pools in Heshbon, her nose to the tower of Lebanon. Everything is conventionally expressed: maidenhood is a garden shut up, chastity is a wall; the lover bending over his bride is a 'banner of love' waving over her; she does not clasp him to her bosom, but bids him sport on the 'mountains of separation.' Symbolism is literary reserve: and in this particular poetic style it is most fitting to give expression to nuptial love. Undoubtedly the poem, as here interpreted, is a celebration of pure conjugal love — the purer, since it is conjugal love triumphing over the established pleasures of the harem,—

There are threescore queens,
And fourscore concubines,
And virgins without number:
My dove, my undefiled, is but one.

Hence, in its secondary interpretation, *Solomon's Song* has been traditionally understood in a spiritual sense, as when *Isaiah* celebrates Zion as Jehovah's Bride, or *Revelation* describes the Bride of the Lamb. And in its natural literary interpretation *The Song of Songs* is the great honeymoon poem of universal literature.

CHAPTER VIII

PROPHECY AS A BRANCH OF LITERATURE

We pass to the important portion of Holy Scripture which is covered by the general title of Prophecy. At the outset a difficulty arises from a common misunderstanding as to the meaning of the word. In modern English to prophesy is to predict: and a large number of Bible readers come to Scriptural prophecy with the idea that they are reading the literature of prediction. There is no such notion in the word as properly understood. The *pro-* of prophecy is not the *pro-* that means 'beforehand' (as in *programme*), but the *pro-* that means 'instead of' (as in *pronoun*): a 'prophet' is one who speaks in place of another — an interpreter. The biblical sense of the term is well seen in a passage of *Exodus* (vii. 1). Moses has been shrinking from the task imposed on him by God on the ground of being a man of slow and difficult speech; the reply is made: —

> See, I have made thee [Moses] a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

As Aaron is thus a speaker in place of Moses, putting into formal speech the thoughts of his leader, so the prophets are interpreters for God. If ever they are found to predict, the prediction is an accident, not the essence of the prophecy.

To obtain a fuller conception of the term we must go, not only to etymology, but to history. We have already seen how the prophetic function came into prominence at a particular crisis in the history of Israel. Originally, Israel was a theocracy, knowing no government but the will of God, as interpreted by Moses or Joshua. In time it came to be governed by secular monarchs: at once the prophetic order established itself to represent the older idea of the theocracy. Occasionally, as with Isaiah and Hezekiah, it would happen that the prophet and the king were on the same side: the prophets were then religious statesmen — statesmen of a people with whom State and Church were one. More often the prophets were in opposition to the secular government; they were not the counsellors who guided, but the agitators who roused to resistance. The whole activity of such prophets constitutes 'prophecy'; hence the books of the prophets are found, at times to record the general history of the period, at times to deal with the prophet's secret intercourse with God, or public encounters with kings. Or they treasure up the proverb-like sayings — technically, 'sentences' — by which leading ideas of these theocratic statesmen were brought home to the common people. Large parts of these prophetic books are rightly described as discourses. But even here we must avoid the misleading analogy of modern sermons. Nothing can be more incongruous than to imagine an Isaiah or a Jeremiah standing with a neatly written manuscript before a devout and attentive audience. The discourses of the prophetic books represent the substance of spoken utterance; very often, it would appear, the spirit of a whole series of encounters between a prophet and his people or king has been worked up afresh into the form of written literature, to make a single one of the discourses as they have come down to us.

Yet another consideration must be borne in mind before our conception of prophetic literature is complete. What has been said so far covers the whole function of earlier prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha. But in later history the prophets have become men of letters; their works not only represent public utterances, but include written compositions designed for a reading public. The prophets of Israel are poets, in the full sense of the term. They interpret the Divine message in the form of songs and lyric outpourings. They make contributions to creative literature: just as a Milton will convey his conception of the plan of salvation in the form of imaginative stories — of a Paradise Lost and a Paradise Regained — so the prophets of the Bible will use visions and imaginative dramas, as a vehicle in which they bring home to man's highest faculties the providential mysteries with which they feel themselves inspired.

It will thus be evident that prophecy is not a literary form, like epic or drama, but a branch of sacred literature, in which the most varied forms mingle, from the proverbial sentence, or straightforward discourse, to the spiritual song or drama. What binds all kinds of prophetic literature together into a unity is the fact that the prophets are not speaking their own thoughts, but are interpreting for God. The message is Divine; the form in which the message is conveyed is free to range over the whole field of literary expression.

It remains to speak of certain literary forms which are almost peculiar to prophecy, and at the same time unfamiliar to modern readers. One of these, the emblem prophecy, although used by several of the sacred writers, is yet so specially characteristic of Ezekiel, that it will be reserved until *The Book of Ezekiel* can be treated as a whole. Two others will be more conveniently discussed in the present chapter.

The doom songs, as a branch of prophecy, correspond in some sort to the satires and philippics of other literatures. The political life of Israel includes, of course, foreign policy — the relations of the chosen nation with neighbouring peoples, especially with the powerful empires of Egypt and Babylon, from one of which Israel had emerged as an independent nation, and into the other of which it was to be absorbed as a captive people. The messages of prophecy extend to these foreign nations as well as to Israel, but with a difference. It could seldom happen that a prophet would have — like Jonah — an opportunity of speaking directly to some distant nation, in the way in which these sacred statesmen regularly addressed their own people. It is to readers and hearers in Israel that the doom prophecies are addressed; and they take the form of denunciations of external races or cities as enemies of Israel and Jehovah, combined with realistic pictures of coming destruction.

As an example, we may take the Doom of Nineveh, which occupies the whole *Book of Nahum*. The prophecy opens in the form of discourse, and is here cast in the pendulum style that alternates between ideas of judgment and of mercy. We hear of Jehovah as great in power, one who will by no means clear the guilty; who hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet: none can stand before his indignation. Immediately we read of the same Jehovah as good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, who knoweth them that put their trust in him. Again, Jehovah is presented indignantly dispensing judgment to his adversaries, so that affliction shall not rise up the second time. The alternation extends to successive sentences.

> Though I have afflicted thee [*Israel*], I will afflict thee no more. And now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder. — And the LORD hath given commandment concerning thee [*Nineveh*] that no more of thy name be sown.

Suddenly there are seen upon the mountains the feet of one that brings good tidings: with this link the prophecy passes from discourse into realistic vision, and the overthrow of Nineveh is being presented.

> He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face:
> Keep the munition; watch the way.

The excitement of defence is vividly pictured: red shields of the valiant, chariots flashing with steel, the terror of shaken spears, chariots jostling against one another in the broad ways, with zigzag flamings of bright axles. But in vain. As their leader proudly remembers his worthies these are seen to stumble. There is hastening to man the walls, and meanwhile the river has proved a gate to the enemy; the strong city seeming to dissolve as the inhabitants are thus snatched into captivity, the handmaids mourning like doves and tabering upon their breasts.

But Nineveh hath been from of old like a pool of water;
  Yet they flee away:
"Stand, stand" —
  But none looketh back.

Take ye the spoil of silver,
  Take the spoil of gold;
For there is none end of the store,
  The glory of all pleasant furniture.

She is empty, and void, and waste:
  And the heart melteth, and the knees smite together;
And anguish is in all loins;
  And the faces of them all are waxed pale.

As this elaborate prophecy continues there is a momentary recurrence to Divine denunciation, and this is followed by a lyric picture of the denounced city in its sinful pomp: a bloody city, full of lies and rapine.

The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels;
And pransing horses, and jumping chariots;
The horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear;

And a multitude of slain, and a great heap of carcases:
And there is none end of the corpses;
They stumble upon their corpses.

But the indignation of Jehovah sounds forth, and at once there is matter for the taunt songs of Nineveh's foes. Is she better than No-amon, ramparted by the sea, with Ethiopia and Egypt for strengtheners, Put and Lubim as helpers? Yet was she carried into captivity! A similar destruction is seen for Nineveh: fortresses falling like shaken figs into the mouth of the eater; warriors turning women; gates opened to the foe and bars devoured by fire; fastnesses, laboriously built and busily stored, all made vain by sword and fire; population numerous as cankerworms, like cankerworms spreading wings and flying away; crowned heads and proud marshals, like swarms of grasshoppers in the chill hedges, vanishing as the grasshoppers vanish when the sun is risen. The final note of the prophecy is the peace that is made by solitude — the solitude of utter destruction.

> Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria,
>   Thy worthies are at rest:
> Thy people are scattered upon the mountains,
>   And there is none to gather them.

Similarly, the whole *Book of Obadiah* is a doom prophecy directed against Edom. Assyria, Tyre, and Zidon, Philistia, Damascus, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, are all subjects for prophetic attack.[1] The most elaborate of these sacred philippics are reserved for the imperial foes, Babylon and Egypt. *Isaiah* pictures[2] how, as Babylon falls, the whole nether world is moved to meet him: —

> Art thou also become weak as we?
>   Art thou become like unto us? . .
> How art thou fallen from heaven,
>   O Day Star, son of the morning!
> How art thou cut down to the ground,
>   Which didst lay low the nations!
> And thou saidst in thine heart, 'I will ascend into heaven
>   I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
> And I will sit upon the mount of congregation,
>   In the uttermost parts of the north:
> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
>   I will be like the Most High.'
> Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell,
>   To the uttermost parts of the pit.

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[1] For a list of doom prophecies, see in the Appendix.

[2] Chapters xiii–xiv.

With even greater elaborateness Jeremiah[1] hurls against Babylon a sevenfold denunciation, the central section of which gathers itself into a sevenfold image of doom. The sword is to smite, the drought is upon the waters, the destroying wind shall fan, foes shall fill the city like cankerworms. Babylon has been Jehovah's battle-axe, to be broken in pieces itself now its work is done; the destroying mountain shall be a burnt-out volcano, desolate forever; Babylon is the threshing-floor at the season of treading. In *Ezekiel* is found a sevenfold doom of Egypt,[2] powerful in its seven images and elaborated details. In *Isaiah*,[3] by an almost unique effect, the doom of Egypt ends in a note of restoration.

> In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth : for that the LORD of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

The doom prophecies have contributed a notable image to sacred literature. This is the image of the watchman.[4] Prophecy seems to take its stand on the eastern boundary of the holy land, with the prophetic watchman yet further advanced, peering, not into the darkness of the night, but into the dimness of the wilderness over which (as from Babylon and Assyria) hosts of destruction must pass.

Voice out of Seir

Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?

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[1] Chapters l–li.

[2] Chapters xxix–xxxii.

[3] Chapter xix.

[4] Especially, *Isaiah* xxi–xxii.

The Watchman

The morning cometh,
  And also the night:
If ye will enquire, enquire ye;
  Come ye again.

This is the ordinary formula of the night watchman to convey that all is well. But the response is different when the time of Babylon's doom has arrived. At first through the prophetic night nothing but voices are heard, striking terror and raising mystic anticipations.

"Go up, O Elam;
  Besiege, O Media
All the sighing thereof will I make to cease."

The hearer pants with terror, dismay dims hearing and vision. "The twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me": in other words, the day [of judgment] so much longed for has come, and is too terrible to contemplate.

"They prepare the table,
  They spread the carpets,
  They eat, they drink;
Rise up, ye princes, anoint the shield."

It is again the Divine voice heard cheering on the destroyers to their task. At last sight is added to sound.

The Watchman

O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time,
  And am set in my ward whole nights:
And, behold, here cometh a troop of men,
  Horsemen in pairs.

The Divine voice interprets that Babylon is fallen, the graven images of her gods broken to the ground.

The other special form of prophetic literature which has yet to be described is one for which there is no generally accepted name; it will here be called the 'rhapsody.' In modern art perhaps the nearest approach to it is the oratorio, or sacred cantata. The general effect is that the workings of Divine providence are brought home to our minds in the form of dramatic movement. But it is spiritual drama. The stage comprehends all space; the changing scenery is conveyed by vision or description. The personages of such a drama may include God himself; the Divine address to any personage or people makes these at once a part of the scene; vague voices and cries help to carry on the dialogue, or the prophet himself may be one of the speakers in the vision which he is seeing. Like the chorales in Bach's oratorios, lyric outbursts at intervals comment upon the action. All forms of literature, even narrative description, may be used to carry on what nevertheless, as a whole, is felt to be drama.

Perhaps the simplest example is the Rhapsody of the Chaldeans, which occupies the whole *Book of Habakkuk*. The first of its three acts, or visions, is dialogue between God and the Prophet. The Prophet complains of violence in the world going unpunished, how the law is slacked, and judgment perverted. This is the answer that comes: —

> *God.* — Behold ye among the nations, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I work a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation; which march through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not

> theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgement and their dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves; and their horsemen bear themselves proudly: yea, their horsemen come from far; they fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour. They come all of them for violence; their faces are set eagerly as the east wind: and they gather captives as the sand. Yea, he scoffeth at kings, and princes are a derision unto him: he derideth every strong hold; for he heapeth up dust, and taketh it. Then shall he sweep by as a wind, and shall pass over, and be guilty; even he whose might is his god.

This brilliant description seems strange in the mouth of Deity: it reads like an exaltation of godless might over right. It is just this feeling that the Prophet proceeds to express.

> Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? thou diest not. O LORD, thou hast ordained him for judgement; and thou, O Rock, hast established him for correction. Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness, wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he?

A perplexity of Divine providence has thus been fully opened: how can a righteous God use as his instrument of judgment a power more evil than the evil which is judged and destroyed?

The solution of this mystery makes the second act. The Divine answer is hidden under one of the powerful images of prophecy, which it is so easy to miss. The image is that of intoxication: the Chaldean's soul is puffed up, he cannot go straight. All the haughty march of this prosperity-intoxicated empire is no more than the drunkard's reeling that goes before his fall. At once is heard the taunt-song of Chaldea's victims, rejoicing in the overthrow of their oppressor. Chaldea's aggrandisement has been a living upon borrowed money: they are at hand who shall exact usury. The tyrant has been building high: but he has built his own shame into the structure, and now it is finished the stone cries shame out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber answers it. The Chaldean has trusted to idols of gold and silver: but Jehovah is the teacher of the nations, let all the earth sit in silence at his feet. Thus, the prophetic revelation is that Chaldean godlessness is but allowed to do the righteous work of Jehovah; doomed to perish, when the work is done, with a ruin vaster than it has inflicted.

But so far the judgment on the Chaldean oppressor is only foreseen in the future: the third act of the rhapsody makes judgment a present reality. It is a magnificent ode. In the prelude, and again in the postlude, we have the feelings of the prophetic watchman. The body of the ode realises all nature in convulsion. The day of judgment rises in the east: flashing rays of dawn mark the fingers of the avenging hand. As the day gathers strength, pestilence, fiery bolts, earthquake are ushering heralds; mountains flee, nations to the confines of civilisation are in affliction, the very sun and moon stand still in their habitations, and the deep utters voice and lifts up hands on high.

> Is the LORD displeased against the rivers?
> Is thine anger against the rivers, or thy wrath against the
> sea? . . . .
>
> Thou art come for the salvation of thy people,
> For the salvation of thine anointed.

The day of doom sets over the western sea, with surging of mighty waters. The Prophet is left trembling with the terrors of the very visitation for which he had prayed; but it is terror which passes into surer confidence.

For though the fig tree shall not blossom,
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
The labour of the olive shall fail,
And the fields shall yield no meat;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

A perplexing question of Divine providence has been opened in dialogue, solved with the aid of lyric song, and the solution has been carried forward in the full elaboration of an ode. This union of varied literary forms in a single dramatic movement makes a typical example of the rhapsody.

The Book of Joel gives us a more extended example — the Rhapsody of the Locust Plague. Here, again, the theme is the Divine judgments, but in a different sense: we have first a judgment upon Israel that serves to reform and purify, then judgment between Israel and the nations that have oppressed her. The movement falls into seven successive acts, or visions. The first presents the land of Israel mourning in desolation: old men, revellers, priests, husbandmen, are in their turn heard bewailing the ravaged land, and draw together into a general assembly of the whole people, crying that the Day of the Lord is at hand. With the second vision the panic intensifies: the day of doom has actually broken in clouds and darkness. Under the concealed image of a locust plague, mystic foes are presented as approaching: an irresistible march in which, mysteriously, no ranks are broken, and none swerves out of his place. The advancing hosts are upon the city: then, with the third stage of the movement, comes a surprise, and a voice of mercy.

> *The Lord.* — Yet even now turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, and repenteth him of the evil.
>
> *The People.* — Who knoweth whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meal offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

This first stirring of repentance grows into a solemn assembly of the whole people, from old men to children, the bridegroom going forth out of his chamber and the bride out of her closet, all joining in a prayer for mercy. Accordingly, with the fourth act it is said: —

> Then was the LORD jealous for his land, and had pity on his people.

As the promises of the Lord are heard, the land seems to recover from its desolation: the northern army is driven away, the pastures of the wilderness spring beneath the former and the latter rain, the floors are full of wheat, and the fats overflow with wine and oil. We pass to a further stage: for Israel a spiritual outpouring upon all, until the sons and daughters prophesy, young men see visions, and old men dream dreams; for the enemies of Israel a heralding of doom in darkened sun and bloodstained moon, with wonders in heaven and earth. The sixth stage is an advance to the Valley of the Lord's Decision: the voice of Jehovah is heard cheering his hosts to the harvest that is already ripe. There is a vision of multitudes and multitudes in the Valley of Decision: then all resolves into darkness and roaring, until the seventh and final vision displays a holy region and a scene of eternal peace, mountains dropping sweet wine, and hills flowing with milk.

This rhapsody has illustrated a form of poetic movement which is important for its bearing upon interpretation. This may be compared to the figure of an arch: the successive stages of the movement advance to a crisis which is in the centre of the poem, not at the close; then they reverse their direction, so that each of the last three stages corresponds to one of the first three. The following figure will convey the idea: —

4. Relief and Restoration,
ii. 18–27.

3. At the last moment Repentance, ii. 12–17.	5. Afterward: Israel spiritualised — the Nations summoned to judgment, ii. 28–iii. 8.
2. Judgment visibly Advancing: Crisis, ii. 1–11.	6. Advance to the Valley of Decision: Crisis, iii. 9–16.
1. The Land of Israel desolate and mourning, i.	7. The Holy Mountain and Eternal Peace, iii. 17–21.

It thus appears that the central and determining section of the whole movement is the fourth, where the idea of relief and restoration is introduced. On the two sides of this we have repentance and, to balance it, a higher spiritualisation. The second stage is the crisis of advance in the judgment on Israel; the corresponding sixth section is the advance to a crisis in the judgment on the nations. The opening picture of desolation is reversed in the final scene of holiness and peace.

The term 'rhapsody' will cover a great variety of literary compositions. Thus, what is otherwise a simple prophetic discourse may be diversified by occasional realistic passages. *Zephaniah* is a fine example. At the outset the Lord is uttering words of denunciation: —

> I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the ground, saith the LORD. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling-blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the face of the ground, saith the LORD.

At once lyric song is heard: —

> Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD:
>   For the Day of the LORD is at hand:
> For the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice,
>   He hath sanctified his guests!

The Divine threatenings continue: He will search Jerusalem with candles, and will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil. Again the lyrics interrupt: —

> The great Day of the LORD is near:
>   It is near and hasteth greatly!
> Even the voice of the Day of the LORD;
>   The mighty man crieth there bitterly.
>
> That Day is a day of wrath,
>   A day of trouble and distress,
> A day of wasteness and desolation,
>   A day of darkness and gloominess,

A day of clouds and thick darkness,
  A day of the trumpet and alarm,
Against the fenced cities,
  And against the high battlements.

Throughout the whole *Book of Zephaniah* this alternation is kept up, between continuous discourse of Divine judgment, and outbursts of lyrics which interrupt, in order to celebrate and comment upon what the denunciatory discourse has brought forward.[1]

At the furthest remove from such rhapsodic discourse stands what is the most elaborate and complex illustration of this kind of literature — the Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed, covering the last twenty-six chapters of our *Book of Isaiah*.[2] Not only in its literary form, but also in its range of thought this work is nothing less than stupendous. Its starting-point is a definite historic event — the deliverance of Israel from Babylonish captivity by the conquering career of Cyrus: from this the field of view widens to present the whole scheme of Divine providence, in its dealings with the chosen nation, and through this chosen nation with all the world.

There is a prelude[3] which — precisely like the prelude of a modern musical drama — lyrically foreshadows what is to be worked out in detail by the seven visions that follow. The keynote is a word of comfort from the mouth of Jehovah.

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[1] This alternation of Divine monologue and interrupting lyrics may be called *doom form*, from its frequent use in prophecies of that type.

[2] It is presented in its full literary structure in the *Isaiah* volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible*. In the ordinary version the dialogue and other features of literary form are difficult to catch.

[3] Chapter xl. 1–11.

> Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

In response, voices are heard to carry the glad tidings across the desert to Jerusalem in her humiliation.

A Voice of One Crying

Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the LORD,
  Make straight in the desert a high way for our God.
Every valley shall be exalted,
  And every mountain and hill shall be made low;
And the crooked shall be made straight,
  And the rough places plain:
And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
  And all flesh shall see it together.

This part of the prelude is in touch with the first vision, and its climax in the return of the exiles across the desert to their home. But the voice of glad tidings encounters a voice of despair, and we have an anticipation of the dialogue with Desponding Zion in the second vision.

Voice of the Tidings

Cry!

A Despairing Voice

  What shall I cry?
All flesh is grass,
And all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:
  The grass withereth,
  The flower fadeth,
  Because the breath of the LORD bloweth upon it:
Surely the people is grass!

Voice of the Tidings

  The grass withereth,
  The flower fadeth:
But the word of our God shall stand for ever.

A voice is heard now further on its way to Jerusalem, and we are carried to the point where, in the fourth vision, the messengers will be seen on the mountains.

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,
  Get thee up into the high mountain;
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem,
  Lift up thy voice with strength;
Lift it up, be not afraid;
  Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Yet another voice is heard in this prelude; and it seems to epitomise the alternation between judgment and salvation with which the whole rhapsody is to conclude.

Behold, the Lord GOD will come as a mighty one,
And his arm shall rule for him:
Behold his reward is with him,
And his recompence before him.
  He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,
  He shall gather the lambs in his arm,
  And carry them in his bosom,
  And shall gently lead those that give suck.

The dramatic movement itself opens with the first of the seven visions, which has for its theme Jehovah's Servant delivered from Bondage. This has already been discussed, by way of epilogue to the history of Israel.[1] The conception is of a whole world summoned before the bar of Jehovah; the peoples come from the furthest isles, the worshippers of idols in panic, Israel supported by journeying mercies of its God. Jehovah makes challenge to the idol peoples to put a meaning on the course of events, that shall connect the end with the beginning. When the idols are dumb and helpless,

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[1] Above, pages 82–8. It covers *Isaiah* xl. 12–xlviii.

Jehovah's own interpretation of history is made known: how that Israel is his Servant, and his service is to bring light to the Gentiles; how that Israel has been blind to his mission, and has fallen, for his sins, into the prison houses of the nations; how that the time of redemption has come, and Cyrus is Jehovah's instrument, a conquered world being the price paid for the deliverance of the Lord's people; how that Israel comes forth from the imprisoning peoples, not only free, but awakened to his mission — a blind people that hath eyes, a deaf people that hath ears. All this is brought out in the speeches of Jehovah, as alternately he addresses his Servant Israel and the assembled nations; at times outbursts of lyric verse serve as interrupting Amens; or the taunt-song is heard over cruel Babylon deprived of her prey; or, finally, there is the celebration of the people of the Lord delivered and led across the desert, where waters flow from the rock to quench their thirst.

The second vision[1] presents the Servant of Jehovah awakened to his mission — the salvation not of the tribes of Israel only, but also of the Gentiles. He exercises his double ministry. Glorious words are spoken of the exiles brought in safety over the desert. In dialogue with Desponding Zion the Servant of Jehovah declares how a woman may forget her sucking child, but Zion cannot be forgotten by Jehovah. The fearers of Jehovah among the nations are encouraged. But at this point there seems a change in the conception of this 'Servant of Jehovah.' Before this the term has been applied unmistakably to the nation of Israel. Now nationality seems to gather itself into a personality, that not only can succour others, but also suffer martyrdom itself: —

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[1] *Isaiah* xlix–l.

> I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

The chosen people appear under two different names in this drama: the name 'Israel' seems to describe the presence of the people, diffused (it may be) over the world; 'Zion,' on the other hand, is the name for the organised nation, with the holy land as its base. As the second vision gave us Jehovah's Servant awakened, so the third[1] is devoted to the Awakening of Zion. Jehovah makes appeal to his people from their glorious past, and from the future of glory he is reserving for them. But from Zion there is no response. The Celestial Chorus seems to encourage Jehovah, recalling old deliverances and a Red Sea dried up. Again Jehovah makes appeal; again there is silence. The Celestial Chorus addresses Zion, crying to awake, and stand up from her fall and staggering. In vain. Yet again the Celestial Chorus makes appeal: —

> Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;
> Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city.

At last the awakening begins. Beautiful upon the mountains are seen the feet of the messengers. The Watchmen of Jerusalem have caught the sight, and sing together the good tidings. Now the waste places of Jerusalem sing together, for they have caught Jehovah's word of comfort. Now the arm of the Lord is made bare, and all the ends of the earth see the salvation of Zion.

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[1] *Isaiah* li–lii. 12.

We have reached the fourth and central section[1] of the rhapsody, and it is full of the exaltation of Jehovah's Servant: to the astonishment of the nations that had despised his marred visage and form unlike the sons of men. But who is the Servant of Jehovah thus exalted? We have seen that originally the term denotes the nation of Israel; that at the close of the second vision the nation seemed to change into a suffering personality. With the stage of exaltation the Servant of Jehovah appears a mystic personality, whose sufferings are vicarious. The rest of this fourth vision is spoken by the Chorus of Nations, whose astonishment serves to present the sufferings of Jehovah's Servant as the redemption of the peoples.

Surely he hath borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows:
  Yet we did esteem him stricken,
  Smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities:
  The chastisement of our peace was upon him;
  And with his stripes we are healed.

From the Servant of Jehovah awakened we passed to the awakening of Zion; from the Servant of Jehovah exalted we pass naturally, in the fifth vision,[2] to Zion Exalted. We hear the song of Zion as the Bride of Jehovah: —

For thy Maker is thine husband;
The Lord of hosts is his name.

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[1] *Isaiah* lii. 13–liii.

[2] *Isaiah* liv–lv.

Another song celebrates Zion as the city of beauty and peace, once afflicted and tempest-tossed. The third presents Zion as witness to the nations; by appointment of Jehovah she summons them to forsake evil and enter into an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David. The vision ends with a procession of redeemed nations amid a world transformed into rejoicing.

We have reached the point where the rhapsody becomes most difficult of interpretation, and its trend of thought furthest removed from the spirit of modern literature. The acts of a modern drama are necessarily successive in time. In a spiritual drama, where representation to the eye is impossible, the connection of parts may be logical, and not temporal. The five visions so far reviewed make a unity, in which Divine providence has been represented in its historical aspect: the choice of a nation through which all other nations are to be blessed; the fall of this Israel from its mission into captivity; the deliverance of Israel from bondage; its awakening; its exaltation; finally, the redemption of all peoples through the vicarious sufferings of the mystic Servant of Jehovah. From this historical aspect of providence we now pass to the ideas of redemption and judgment in the abstract, and the term 'Servant of Jehovah' disappears. Israel is still the subject of what is presented. But the introduction[1] to the sixth vision makes it clear that we are to understand an Israel not limited by nation or race: the stranger and outcasts are gathered in to the people who are to see the righteousness of God; his house is a house of prayer for all nations.

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[1] Chapter lvi. 1–8.

Each of the two visions presents the whole work of providence, but under different aspects: and the sixth vision[1] is a drama of redemption. It opens with a picture of moral chaos, a vineyard trodden by all beasts of the field, guarded by dumb dogs that love to slumber; or, if God is served, it is by formalists, who wonder that their service brings no blessing. In this chaos the spirit of prophecy is seen at work: denouncing corruption, proclaiming mercy, raising the formalists to a more spiritual idea of worship.

> Is such the fast that I have chosen? the day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? . . . Is not this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free?

Gradually Israel rouses to repentance: and the turning-point is reached as Jehovah looks, and wonders that there is no intercessor: therefore his own arm brings salvation. As a rushing river which the breath of the Lord driveth, so a Redeemer comes to Zion. At once the rhapsody breaks into the song of Zion Redeemed.

> Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
> And the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

There is lyric picturing of nations coming to share this light; of exiles hastening home by land and sea; through the opened gates the wealth of nations is borne to beautify the sanctuary; Zion's walls are salvation, her gates praise; her sun shall go down no more. The song subsides into a soliloquy of the Redeemer: —

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[1] *Isaiah* lvi–lxii.

> The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

The Redeemer is heard in dialogue with Zion, now no longer despondent; he cries to the Watchmen, as the Lord's remembrancers, to give their God no rest till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The vision concludes with the song of the Watchmen, making straight the path to Zion for the redeemed hastening from the ends of the earth.

The seventh vision[1] passes to the idea of judgment, the separation between good and evil. Once more the image of the prophetic watchman is employed, to introduce a vision of judgment.

Chorus of Watchmen

Who is this that cometh from Edom,
  With crimsoned garments from Bozrah?
  This that is glorious in his apparel,
Marching in the greatness of his strength?

He who Cometh

I that speak in righteousness,
Mighty to save.

Chorus of Watchmen

Wherefore art thou red
  In thine apparel,
  And thy garments
Like him that treadeth in the winefat?

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[1] From Chapter lxiii.

He who Cometh

I have trodden the winepress alone;
And of the peoples there was no man with me:
  Yea, I trod them in mine anger,
  And trampled them in my fury;
  And their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments,
  And I have stained all my raiment.

This is no more than the foreshadowing: for the actual judgment preparation is made by repentance. The whole history of God's gracious dealings with Israel, and Israel's unfaithfulness and fall, is gathered into one survey, with passionate prayer that God would rend the heavens, that the mountains might flow down at his presence! At last Jehovah descends in judgment: the last strain of the rhapsody is the pendulum-like alternation between judgment and salvation. The rebellious find their iniquities recompensed into their own bosom: a seed out of Jacob shall inherit the blessed mountains. They that prepare a table for Fortune, and pour wine to Destiny, shall find themselves destined to the fortune of the sword; all the while in a new heaven and a new earth Jerusalem shall forget her troubles. There are confused cries of tumult from the city, Jehovah recompensing his foes; Zion cannot understand her deliverance, for before she hath travailed she hath brought forth. All nations and tongues shall gather to the feasts upon the holy mountain of Jerusalem; a land encompassed with eternal purifying forces — the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched.

In the literature of the whole world there is nothing which can be paralleled with this rhapsody of Zion Redeemed. Its foundation thought is a philosophy of history, the events of all time becoming one in the light of a Divine purpose. Centuries before the most enlightened minds could grasp it, the rhapsody presents the idea of spiritual conquest: in place of empire founded on force, it holds up to its hero nation the mission of bringing light to the Gentiles. It enthrones the supreme moral conception of redemption, and surrounds this with attractive images. It offers the stimulating ideal of a golden age in the future and not in the past; yet for attaining such ideal it recognises as an essential condition the stern judgment that forever separates evil from good. And these colossally great conceptions are not shadowed forth in philosophical speculation, they are made alive with dramatic setting and movement: but it is a drama that is enacted in the region of the spiritual, with God for its leading personage, and providence for its plot.

CHAPTER IX

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

THE prophetic books of the Old Testament are sixteen in number. Of these, however, five — standing in the names of Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah — consist each of a single literary composition. They have been sufficiently treated in the preceding chapter. The rest are miscellaneous collections of works in poetry and prose.[1]

The title page to *The Book of Isaiah* stands thus: The Vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. As *The Book of Isaiah* has come down to us, its latter half is occupied with the rhapsody of Zion Redeemed — fully described in the preceding chapter — the authorship of which is one of the problems of literary history. Apart from this, the contents of the book agree with the title in presenting the life-work of a prophet statesman. The Call of the Prophet dates itself "in the year that King Uzziah died." At the other end, the last section is prophetic history, recording the ministry of Isaiah under Hezekiah. One of the intervening sections relates in set terms to a crisis in the reign of Ahaz. As regards the rest, although commentators labour to read the utterances of Isaiah into their exact historic setting, I would rather suggest that the language is general and not particular; that we have, not exact reports of actual discourses, but the more enduring thoughts suggested by various stages of a life-long ministry worked up afresh into permanent literary form, with a significance widened from the original circumstances, an applicability that is universal.

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[1] For References, and divisions of books, see in the Appendix.

By common consent, Isaiah is one of the world's greatest writers: the whole range of literary expression — finished oratory, lyric song, imaginative dramatisation — is handled with the ease of a great master. If we attempt to sum up the general spirit of the whole, Isaiah may be termed a man of a single idea, and this idea is the dominant note of all Hebrew prophecy: the presentation of a glorious future for God's people, but a future which is to be reached only through a purging judgment, that shall leave only a remnant to be saved.

The first section opens with a general arraignment of Israel: the whole head is sick, the heart faint, there is no soundness, but only wounds, bruises, and festering sores. Yet this is to lead to the opposite tone: —

> Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

A more elaborate discourse follows: to the glory of the Lord's mountain, established at the head of the mountains, the way lies through a judgment, in which the haughtiness of man hides itself in caves and holes from the terror of Jehovah. There follow a parable of a chosen vineyard bringing forth wild grapes, and a song of sevenfold woe. At last the prophet describes the vision that called him to his ministry. In the midst of the overpowering splendour of the Divine presence Isaiah feels himself a man of unclean lips, dwelling in the midst of a people of unclean lips; when his lips have been cleansed by a coal from the altar, he receives a commission to a prophetic work that shall only serve to intensify the rebellion of the rebellious, until the saved remnant is left as no more than the stock of a felled tree.

The second division of the prophecies of Isaiah is devoted to a strange moment of national history, when Judah found itself confronted by an unnatural alliance, between the brother kingdom of Israel and the common enemy, Syria. The panic of King Ahaz and his courtiers is met by Isaiah with a series of brave hopes, utterances bound together by the 'sign' (or text) of 'Immanuel.' The allied enemies are in a mood of such scornful confidence that a newborn child among them will be named with the proud name, God-with-us (Immanuel).[1] But (Isaiah declares) before that child shall be old enough to discern good from evil he shall be eating famine food, and the land shall be forsaken of both the allied kings. The prophet foresees the vast power in the distance, in comparison with which the alliance between Israel and Syria is a trifle: Assyrian conquest shall come in like a flood, not sparing even Judah, but filling the breadth of the land that is boasting its 'God-with-us.' Yet again Isaiah challenges the allied foes: —

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[1] I am varying from the usual interpretation of this sign, Immanuel. The question is fully discussed in the *Isaiah* volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible*, pages 223–230; or in my *Literary Study of the Bible*, page 378 note.

Take counsel together,
  And it shall be brought to nought;
Speak the word,
  And it shall not stand:
For GOD IS WITH US.

The boasting word of the enemy has been caught up, in a true sense, for Judah. And — after a lyric contrast of the hopes of the foes and the actual triumph of Judah — the changed application of 'Immanuel' is enlarged to a still more glorious consummation.

For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given;
  And the government shall be upon his shoulder:
And his name shall be called, WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR,
MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER,
  PRINCE OF PEACE.

The third section is a picture of Assyrian invasion — an idealised picture of Assyrian invasion in general. At its crisis it is confounded by the power of Jehovah. The contrasting picture is unfolded: the stock of Jesse shooting out afresh, becoming an ensign around which the nations flock; the scene is a holy mountain, where the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; all enmity of peoples at an end, there shall be heard only songs of rejoicing around the wells of salvation.

The fourth section contains the doom songs over foreign peoples. It closes with a grand rhapsody of judgment, the whole universe dissolving under the visitation of Jehovah, cries of the saved and the lost alternating amid the chaos and gloom; at the centre and climax of the vision the veil is rent, and the scene reveals itself as a holy mountain for the saved, around which are scattered the downtrodden enemies of Israel and of Jehovah.

There remains the fifth section, in which the constant theme of Isaiah is applied to a political situation, which is, however, chronic and general rather than particular — a tendency to seek refuge in some other direction, rather than in submission to the judgment of God. The rulers of the nation have a 'refuge of lies'; they have made a 'covenant with death,' that he shall pass them by in the universal catastrophe. In some discourses trust in Egypt is the interpretation put upon these general terms. Prophetic scorn sweeps away all these false hopes; the destroying judgment is insisted upon, but beyond is unfolded the glorious restoration. Two ideal pictures crown this series of prophecies. There is a rhapsody of salvation: a salvation coming at the eleventh hour, while the "sinners in Zion" — those who have been resting on these false hopes — tremble before the "everlasting burnings" that come to cleanse the holy city. Once more, there is presented an utter destruction, under which the heavens are rolled up as a scroll, and the smoke of the doomed lands goes up forever; but in contrast we have the wilderness blossoming as a rose, glowing sands changed to refreshing pools of water, and a highway of holiness over which the ransomed of the Lord return with singing to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads.

The Book of Jeremiah may be called a prophetic autobiography. It must not be assumed, of course, that its discourses and poems stand in the exact order of the events to which they refer; but the broad divisions of the book agree with stages in the writer's career. Moreover, Jeremiah, to a greater extent than other prophets, tells his secret intercourse with God, and his personal contact with rulers or the people; his matter is not general, but connected with specified names and incidents. Thus, to read the whole is to get a vivid picture of the life of Jeremiah, and of the times in which he played so large a part.

The central interest is the personality of the prophet himself. Jeremiah's lot was cast at a time when northern Israel had already fallen, and Judah was in her last decline. What appeared of independence was delusive; corruption had left to the nation no freedom except a choice of masters. A courtly aristocracy was looking in the direction of luxurious Egypt; the earnest portion of the nation fought against subservience to Egypt as the worst of all evils. A prophet is naturally in opposition, but Jeremiah had the unpopular mission of holding up to his people subjugation by Babylon as their brightest hope: this was to be the judgment beyond which lay moral restoration. No wonder then that for his whole career he was "the weeping prophet."

> Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!

But stronger than the opposition from without was the sacred impulse from within.

> If I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain.

Thus, in the phrase of the Divine commission which is repeated at the close of his principal compositions, Jeremiah is a brazen wall, a pillar and fortress to his people; they will fight against him, but they will not prevail.

The first part of the book contains poems and discourses, without anything to suggest that the prophet is having any success in his ministry, or any recognition among the men of his time. Following the narrative of Jeremiah's call we have what may be termed the prophet's manifesto — an embodiment of his message in all its fulness. It is a lengthy discourse, pleading with Judah on God's behalf; this at a particular point becomes an elaborate rhapsodic scene, the forbearance of Deity gradually yielding, while the avenging foe is permitted to approach by stages, vividly pourtrayed in rumours and signs of panic, until the end is seen in a people too late mourning in sackcloth and ashes. Shorter discourses and pictures of panic follow. At one point Jeremiah appears as a missionary, commissioned to preach throughout the cities of Judah "the covenant" — the new religious movement born out of the discovery of *Deuteronomy* in Josiah's reign. In this part of the work is found the most considerable of Jeremiah's poems — the Rhapsody of the Drought: its scene, a desolated Judæa; its dramatic movement, an intercessory struggle, in which Jehovah, who at first will not so much as speak to the repentant People except through the Prophet, is finally won to mercy.

At last a turning-point is found in the career of Jeremiah, and in a moment he becomes a leader of his people. This seems to be brought about by a single discourse — nay, by a single metaphor. The preacher has caught a lesson from the work of the potter.

> And when the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?

The familiarity of this image in modern discourse must not make us insensible to the excitement that would attend this historic use of it. The whole trouble of Israel lay in a false confidence that its position as Jehovah's chosen people was unassailable; when the reminder came that the Divine potter might refashion his clay into a vessel of dishonour, the national conscience quivered. At once the faithful rallied around Jeremiah: attended by elders of the people and of the priests he led a grand public demonstration, in which the symbol of the potter's bottle was carried to the valley of destruction. On his return he was arrested: this was the first stroke in the long conflict of kings, rulers, priests, people, around Jeremiah as a supreme prophet. The life of Jeremiah henceforward is the history of Jerusalem in her fall.

The mass of prophecies following this point do not make a succession in time. Besides the dooms on foreign peoples, which are gathered together as a final section, there seem to be groupings of discourses under such heads as messages to kings, controversial prophecies, and the like. Nevertheless, the general impression of the whole is a chronicle of the last days of Jerusalem; and more and more, as we read on, prophecy becomes history. When the city has fallen, the career of Jeremiah comes to the strangest of conclusions: the prophet who all his life has inveighed against Egypt is carried forcibly into Egypt by fugitives from Judah; he must in this hated land continue his ministry of rebuke to his fellow-captives, and is met by a stubbornness that puts down all the nation's woes to Jeremiah's counsels. But if this was the end of the prophet's acts, it was not the goal of his hopes. A section of his book is devoted to prophecies of the restoration, and all his powers of vivid expression are employed to depict a glorious future for a spiritualised Israel.

> Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

With *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* we pass into a different region of literature. Ezekiel among the prophets makes the nearest approach to the modern conception of a spiritual pastor. In part this arises from the circumstances of the case; while Jeremiah is plunged in the political turmoil of Jerusalem, Ezekiel is ministering to a band of his countrymen who have already been carried into captivity beside the river Chebar. Again, in the commission given to the prophet we can see the changed character of his prophetic office. A stupendous vision of Divine glory accompanies the call of Ezekiel. The vision appears three times, and there are three distinct phases in the charge which is imposed. With the first vision Ezekiel is commanded to testify through the representative band of exiles to the nation at large: here his function is that of Isaiah or Jeremiah. A second outburst of vision establishes Ezekiel as the watchman of the captivity; he is made responsible for the souls of those around him, and their blood will be upon his head if they die in their sins and he has failed to speak his warning. But the vision comes yet a third time.

> Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet; and he spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house. But thou, son of man, behold, they shall lay bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them: and I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover, for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God.[1]

It will be remembered how the prophets of Israel were accustomed to move about among the people in their public life, bringing home to them in each crisis some application of Divine truth. Ezekiel is expressly forbidden to do this; he is not to go to the people, but the people are to come to him. In the book that follows, Ezekiel is never seen in public; on the other hand, there is evidence of a daily custom that the elders appear in the prophet's house, waiting till the hand of God shall fall upon him. Even when his hearers are present, Ezekiel is to remain dumb until the prophetic impulse unlocks his speech. Thus what *The Book of Ezekiel* gives us is a picture of daily devotional meetings, and of prophecies poured forth at the moment of their inspiration.[2]

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[1] *Ezekiel* iii. 24–27.

[2] This is not the usual interpretation of the 'dumbness' of Ezekiel. The reasons for my view are fully discussed in the *Ezekiel* volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible*, pages 187–190.

But if the general character of his work approaches the modern pastorate, the mode of Ezekiel's preaching is removed to the furthest degree from the modern sermon. Ezekiel is the great representative of emblem prophecy. We are accustomed to the idea of sermons upon texts; but our texts are quotations from Scripture. In emblem prophecy the text is some visible thing, or some external action, used by way of object lesson; the discourse works out in detail the symbolism and makes application. Such symbolic prophecy we have already seen in such a case as the procession of Jeremiah, which carried aloft a potter's bottle, and solemnly broke it to pieces in the valley of destruction; the symbolic action so described is the text, the comments accompanying this action make the sermon. These emblem prophecies formed the staple of Ezekiel's ministry. The discourses as they stand in *The Book of Ezekiel* must be read as records; they indicate an emblem and its application. Sometimes the application is expanded at length and with eloquence; in other cases a line or two indicates the spiritual application made of the visible symbol, while we are left to imagine the actual discourse spoken by the prophet to his audience of fellow-captives.

A simple illustration is the following :—

> Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness; and say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel: They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein.[1]

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[1] *Ezekiel* xii. 17.

It is easy to imagine the preacher briefly going through the form of eating and drinking after the fashion of those who are panic-stricken with horrors of siege and famine, and then enlarging into a discourse — here left to our imagination — upon the coming overthrow of the sacred city.

The simplest act or gesture may serve as emblem text: the smiting of the hands, or stamping of the feet, or the setting the face in the direction of the doomed land. Or the emblem may be the reiteration of a cry, such as "It cometh! It cometh!" Ezekiel loves to use a parable for text: here the emblem is narrated instead of being visibly acted, yet still is objective in its effect. It is easy to see how the idea of emblem may be extended to include a vision — seen by the prophet, but narrated to the audience: in these cases it is an important principle of interpretation that the vision is no more than the emblematic text; the truth conveyed must be looked for in the application.

At times, however, the symbolic discourse of Ezekiel reaches the highest degree of elaborateness; we have a unique type of literature, needing careful study for its correct interpretation. I will take two widely different illustrations.

> Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it a city, even Jerusalem: and lay siege against it, and build forts against it, and cast up a mount against it; set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it round about. And take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face toward it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.
>
> Moreover, lie thou upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of

> the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have appointed the years of their iniquity to be unto thee a number of days, even three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And again, when thou hast accomplished these, thou shalt lie on thy right side, and shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah: forty days, each day for a year, have I appointed it unto thee. . . . And, behold, I lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast accomplished the days of thy siege.[1]

Neglect of the foundation principle of emblem prophecy — that the emblem is the text only, and not the prophecy itself — has led to strange misinterpretation of the passage just quoted; it has been supposed that Ezekiel was commanded to lie on his side for more than a year by way of prophetic testimony. The simple meaning is that, for the period indicated, the text of the daily sermon would be taken from some portion of the mimic besieging so described; a few moments of dumb show would be sufficient, and then symbolic action would give place to spoken discourse. Thirteen verses[2] contain the sketch of matter which, in actual delivery, the prophet would expand and vary through some hundreds of daily discourses.

There is elaborateness of a different kind where, in place of a text followed by its application, we have symbolic text and interpreting discourse interwoven through the whole of a lengthy prophecy. The great example is the Prophecy of the Sword:[3] here attitude, gesture, visible emblem, sustained dumb show, are all mingled, and combined with song. Now the prophet is personating the threatening war, now he sighs and trembles with the panic of the expectant city; now the point of the sword is used to trace on the ground the route of the conqueror, suddenly it is turned against the enemies of Judah in the midst of their gloating triumph. Intermingling with the prose of prophetic discourse we can trace, in snatches, the Folk-song of the Sword, its lines gathering length as the passion works up.

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[1] Chapter iv. [2] Chapter v. 5–17. [3] *Ezekiel*, Chapter xxi.

A sword,
  A sword,
It is sharpened,
  And also furbished:

It is sharpened that it may make a slaughter;
  It is furbished that it may be as lightning!
And it is given to be furbished that it may be handled:
  The sword it is sharpened, yea it is furbished, to give
    it into the hand of the slayer!

And let the sword be doubled the third time;
  The sword of the deadly wounded:
  It is the sword of the great one that is deadly wounded
Which compasseth them about.

I have set the point of the sword against all their gates,
  That their heart may melt,
  And their stumblings be multiplied:
Ah! it is made as lightning!

It is pointed for slaughter —
  Gather thee together, go to the right;
  Set thyself in array, go to the left —
Whithersoever thy face is set.

It seems to be a law of style in Ezekiel's writing that where visible emblems are not used, a substitute is found in sustained imagery. The doom prophecies against foreign nations — which from the nature of the case could not be spoken in the presence of those against whom they are directed — are made impressive as literature by the way in which a single image will be expanded through a whole discourse, until it comes to have the objective force of a visible picture. Thus the denunciation of the greatest of maritime cities appears as the Wreck of the Good Ship Tyre;[1] we have all the peoples of the world joining in the building and loading of the mighty ship, until it becomes a thing of glory in the seas — only to suffer shipwreck, to the panic and distress of all mariners and merchant princes.

The contents of *The Book of Ezekiel* may be variously analysed, according as we lay more stress upon form or upon matter. If we divide on the basis of the distinct emblem discourses, we may recognise seven books, each of which, except the fourth, contains seven emblem prophecies. The fourth and central section is made up of a single discourse; but this displays the whole range of Ezekiel's doctrine: it is a prophetic manifesto. If we turn our attention to the subject-matter, a simpler arrangement will suggest itself. Alike with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the main obstacle encountered was the obstinate confidence of the demoralised people in the impregnable security of Jerusalem; the main work of the prophets was to undermine this confidence, and rouse to hopes of restoration through moral reform. From this point of view *The Book of Ezekiel* falls into three natural divisions. The doom prophecies are gathered together into one section, and this divides the earlier prophecies, which all insist upon the fall of Jerusalem, from the last, which proclaim a glorious restoration. The first and third sections are bound together by two companion visions of Jerusalem. Among the early discourses we have the Vision of Jerusalem in her Pollutions. The whole book ends with the Vision of Jerusalem in her Glory, prophetic counterpart to the Pattern on the Mount as seen by the founder of the Law, — an elaborated ideal of a perfect city, perfect Temple service, and perfectly organised land.

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[1] Chapter xxvii.

Ezekiel occupies a unique place in literary history, the one great master of a highly specialised and now obsolete literary type. As Isaiah among the prophets was the great poet, Jeremiah the great preacher and statesman, so Ezekiel was the great artist. The highest histrionic power is implied in a dumb show and gesture that could associate itself with oratorical literature in its most severe beauty. It is therefore not surprising that, in the impression made on the very people to whom Ezekiel ministered, there was a danger of the form becoming more attractive than the message it adorned.

> Son of man, the children of thy people talk of thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, . . . saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. . . . And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them nct.[1]

To this artist-preacher was committed a ministry which, through nearly its whole course, was a ministry of rebuke and despair. And for this contrast between spirit and form we are prepared from the first moment of the prophet's call. In the midst of the overpowering vision a roll of a book is spread before Ezekiel: it is written within and without, with lamentations, and mourning, and woe. The prophet in his vision eats this book of woe: and it is in his mouth as honey for sweetness.[1]

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[1] *Ezekiel* xxxiii. 30.

The Book of Daniel falls into two very different parts. First, we have in succession six stories of the captivity, recording the adventures of Daniel and his fellow-exiles in Babylon: how they rose to posts of the highest authority in the empire, and how by their life and wisdom they were able to vindicate the supremacy of Jehovah over all other gods. What follows belongs to apocalyptic or vision prophecy: a series of mystic visions and their interpretations. However full of difficulties these visions may be to the theological interpreter, considered as a work of literature the book needs no further discussion.

Hosea, in the title page to his book of prophecy, is represented as a contemporary of Isaiah; he ministered mainly to the northern kingdom of Israel. The period is one of material prosperity and deep-seated moral corruption, an immediate prelude to the kingdom's final fall. From the literary side two points are notable in regard to *The Book of Hosea*. This writer, more than any other, makes use of the prophetic 'sentence'; long strings of such sentences occupy the centre of the book,[2] as disconnected as the contents of *The Book of Proverbs*. On the other hand, we have, at the opening and close, two elaborate compositions, masterpieces of prophetic imagination; and these give emphasis to what is the foremost conception of Hosea — the passionate love of Jehovah for his rebellious people.

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[1] *Ezekiel* ii. 8–iii. 3.

[2] *E.g.* ix. 7–x.

The first of these is the emblem prophecy of Gomer; unless indeed — as many commentators think — we are to understand the prophet as narrating actual facts, and not weaving a parable.[1] Hosea represents himself (in fact or metaphor) as united by command of God with a wife, Gomer, who is unfaithful; his struggles to bring her to repentance are reminders of God's ways with Israel, and the children of this unhappy union are named so as to symbolise successive stages of divorce from God. At the close of the book another prophecy uses another human bond to convey God's relations with his people. In this rhapsody, The Yearning of God,[2] the image is that of a father, justly incensed, distracted between indignation and tenderness. The literary treatment is striking: the effect of dialogue is produced by alternating monologue, between opposite moods in the Divine breast.

> When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. —
>
> As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. —
>
> Yet I taught Ephraim to go; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat before them. —

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[1] Chapters i–iii. The question is fully discussed in the *Minor Prophets* volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible*, pages 239–241. The chief representative of the other view is Plumptre, who has founded on it his beautiful poem of 'Gomer.' See his edition of *Hosea* in the Cambridge Bible for Schools.

[2] *Hosea* xi–xiv.

> He shall not return into the land of Egypt; but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. And the sword shall fall upon his cities, and shall consume his bars, and devour them, because of their own counsels. And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they call them to him that is on high, none at all will lift himself up. —
>
> How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God and not man. —

The alternation between justice and mercy is prolonged; at last a second speaker appears under the name Ephraim — Hosea's term for northern Israel: the rebellious child speaks words of penitence, and the end is reconciliation.

The Book of Amos is made up of two pieces of prophecy, very different in kind. The first is the simple oracle, an isolated word of Divine inspiration, without note or comment. It stands thus: —

> *The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. And he said:* —

The Lord shall roar from Zion,
  And utter his voice from Jerusalem:
And the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn,
  And the top of Carmel shall wither.

This is an oracle of prediction; and the general suggestion is that this prediction of what actually came to pass as "the great earthquake in the days of Uzziah" raised Amos from his lowly position, and brought him recognition as a notable prophet.

All that follows is a single prophecy, and it may be entitled, A Rhapsody of the Judgment to Come. It is in three sections. The first has the general spirit of a doom song: six stanzas, of markedly parallel structure, voice Divine wrath against six guilty nations; then, by a climax of surprise, the same wrath is hurled at Judah and Israel. Thus, as a first stage of judgment Israel is included among the doomed nations. The second section, again a sevenfold outburst of Divine denunciation, describes the corruption that is already ripe for judgment. In the third section the judgment is presented as advancing by stages, until the overthrow of God's chosen people is complete; yet, at the last, there is a sifted remnant reserved for the restoration that is on the other side of judgment.[1]

Jonah is entirely different in character from the rest of the prophetic books. It is epic prophecy, like the stories of the prophets scattered through *Samuel* and *Kings*: the Divine revelation is conveyed neither in discourse nor dramatic picture, but in the life and acts of the prophet himself. The book falls into two parts, each embodying its half of a complete truth.

At the outset Jonah received a command to go to Nineveh and denounce its wickedness. He resisted, and fled by ship to the far west, seeking to escape from the presence of the Lord. The story tells how a great wind was hurled into the sea; how the affrighted mariners, of varying nations and countries, cried each upon his god; how Jonah himself was roused from sleep to confront the situation. He recognised that the presence of Jehovah was pursuing him, and showed submission by asking to be cast overboard as sole cause of the storm. The mariners reluctantly obeyed; Jonah was cast into the sea, and miraculously rescued. To appreciate the prophetic revelation underlying this part of the story we must place ourselves in the mental position of the times. The early conception of deity was of a local power, an omnipotence bounded by geographical limits. Thus, the servants of the king of Syria, when defeated in battle by Israel, exclaimed[1]: —

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[1] I may just mention a marked feature of Amos's writing, full justice to which could be done only by a detailed comment. This is the parenthetic interruption: rhapsodic presentation of Divine warning or judgment is from time to time interrupted by subjective reflections, chiefly appeals to opponents of prophecy in general. In a less degree this is found in the writings of Isaiah. For a full discussion, see in *The Modern Reader's Bible: Minor Prophets* volume, pages 251–253; *Isaiah* volume, page 213.

> Their god is a god of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we: but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.

A similar conception had animated Jonah; the incident of the tempest brought home to him that the power of Jehovah covered all lands and the sea itself.

A second time the word came to Jonah; he instantly journeyed to Nineveh, and applied himself with zeal to his ministry of denunciation and doom. The result was a surprise; the vast city was roused to repentance, and the doom was stayed. Jonah remonstrated with God at this mercy shown to the Ninevites. It is by a kind of emblem prophecy that God raises his prophet to a loftier conception. In the sultry plains of Nineveh Jonah is sheltered by a gourd plant, and comes to love the fair thing of nature. The gourd is suddenly destroyed; and Jonah declares in the presence of God that he does well to be angry.

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[1] *I Kings* xx. 23.

> And the LORD said: Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city; wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

The revelation here is not the compassion of God, for that Jonah expressly declares he had known from the beginning. But the Hebrew thinker had believed with all his might that mercy was the peculiar privilege of the chosen people of God; by his experience with the gourd plant he was brought into sympathy with a Divine compassion that embraced, not heathen peoples only, but even helpless infancy and the beasts of the field. Thus, the first part of *Jonah* is a revelation of the universal omnipotence of Jehovah; the complete truth is that his mercy is coextensive with his power.

The title page of *Micah* makes the prophet a contemporary of Isaiah; like Isaiah he belongs to the southern kingdom. The two make an interesting contrast; Isaiah immersed in the great affairs of the capital, while Micah exercises his ministry in the country districts of Judah. But the prophetic message is the same; in both cases denunciation of corruption and threatening of doom are balanced by golden hopes of restoration and Messianic rule.

In literary form the book falls into two different parts.

The first[1] is an elaborate discourse of judgment and salvation, which becomes rhapsodic in parts, as it pictures the steps of advancing doom. This is followed by two prophecies in dramatic dialogue. The first is the briefest of all such dialogues, yet embodies a great conception. The mountains — emblem of eternal principles of right — are made judges in Jehovah's controversy with his people. The Divine plaintiff recites his mercies to his chosen nation, and appeals against ingratitude. Defendant Israel knows not what plea to make.

> Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

The mountains pronounce their judgment.

> He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

To the second of Micah's dramatic prophecies allusion has already been made.[2] The same controversy between God and Israel is presented, but a new speaker appears; the 'man of wisdom' represents the remnant to be saved, and rejoices in confidence while all around is despair. The tone of confidence gathers strength, and the dialogue ends with celebration of the pardoning God.

The remaining books of Old Testament prophecy stand in the names of Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. But here arises a question of literary form, whether there is not error in the traditional divisions of the sacred books. Haggai and Zechariah appear in history as prophets of the return, whose office is to strengthen the faith of those who are rebuilding the Temple. The contents of the books confirm this, to the end of the eighth chapter of our *Book of Zechariah*. The rest of this book seems to have no connection with what has preceded, and no connection with the historical personality of Zechariah. Again, 'Malachi' has no resemblance to a personal name; it signifies 'My Messenger,' and makes an excellent subject-title for the book to which it is affixed; moreover, it is clear that it was so understood in the times of the Septuagint and the Targums. The general suggestion of these facts is this: Originally the roll of prophets contained books ascribed to known authors, ending with Zechariah; these were followed by anonymous prophecies, ending with the book entitled *Malachi*. But in time 'Malachi' came to be read as a personal name, like Isaiah or Jeremiah; then the rest of the anonymous prophecies, standing alone, came to attach themselves to *The Book of Zechariah*.

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[1] Chapters i–v.

[2] Above, page 7.

Haggai is made up of four prophecies exactly dated, all of them encouragements to the builders of the Temple. *The Book of Zechariah* (that is, the first eight chapters of the biblical *Zechariah*) is made up of three prophecies, exactly dated in the same manner. The first is a general manifesto of this prophet's message. The third is an elaborate response to a formal inquiry on the subject of fast days. Between these is found a prophetic composition of great literary importance.

The Sevenfold Vision of Zechariah is beyond any prophecy of the Old Testament in the demand it makes upon the imaginative powers. Both in form and spirit it is a counterpart of the still more elaborate *Revelation* of St. John. Dream form pervades the whole; but it is the most complex of all dreams. When, in the middle of the prophecy, it is said that the angel 'wakes' the prophet, the meaning is not that he was waked *from* his dream, but *in* his dream: we have vision within vision and dream within dream. There is what may be called the 'enveloping vision': in a mystic land horses, red, sorrel, and white, stand among the myrtle trees, ready to serve as ministers of the Divine purposes, going to and fro in the earth. This enveloping vision, made prominent at the beginning and the close, remains throughout as a background to what else appears. There follow, like a succession of dissolving views, the seven emblem visions, each symbolising some mercy for Israel. Horns and smiths typify the nations which have afflicted, the powers which are to avenge. The measuring of Jerusalem foreshadows a sacred city that is to spread beyond the power of measurement. The third vision is a counterpart to the scene with which *Job* opens: before the hierarchy of heaven the high priest Joshua, representative of the Temple builders, is arraigned, and gloriously acquitted and exalted. In the central vision the golden candlestick makes sure the completion to the last detail of the restored Temple. Next, the two olive trees typify the two 'sons of oil' — priesthood and princely authority now reconciled. The visions of the flying roll, of the ephah and talent, are made to foreshadow the moral purification of the land. Then the enveloping vision resumes its prominence, and the ministering powers are seen already accomplishing their work. The vision is followed by an epilogue, in which the prophet acts upon the new revelation by a solemn coronation of the High Priest Joshua.

The latter part of the biblical *Zechariah* is occupied, as we have seen, with a group of anonymous prophecies. The first of these[1] might be entitled, The King of Peace. It is in the form of doom prophecies: the monologue of Jehovah is interrupted, from time to time, by lyric outbursts, confirming or celebrating the Divine word. One of these lyric songs justifies the suggested title.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;
  Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee:
  He is just, and having salvation;
Lowly, and riding upon an ass,
  Even upon a colt, the foal of an ass.

The second[2] is an emblem prophecy — The Withdrawal of the Divine Shepherd. Next[3] follow three Prophecies of the Siege, in the form of ordinary discourse.

There remains the book entitled *Malachi*. This has a literary form almost peculiar to itself. It might be called dialectic prophecy: there are discourses on texts, but the texts come as interruptions from the audience addressed. Sometimes the interruption is double.

> A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. *And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?* Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar. *And ye say, wherein have we polluted thee?*

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[1] *Zechariah* ix. 1–xi. 3.

[2] Chapter xi from verse 4.

[3] Chapters xii–xiv.

It is the italicised questions which make the real text of the discourse: its topic is the cheapening of the offerings made to God, the idea that the lame and blind, not good enough for the governor, are good enough for God! In its subject-matter this last book of the Old Testament takes us so far forward in time that the exile seems a thing forgotten; the spiritualisation of Israel brought about by captivity has already begun to lose its force. There is, on the other hand, a looking for a Divine 'Messenger' to come. The last word of the prophecy cites the promise of the lawgiver Moses, that a prophet should be raised up like unto himself: this prophet, says *Malachi*, shall come as precursor to the great and terrible day of the Lord.

CHAPTER X

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

PROPHECY in the New Testament is represented by *The Book of Revelation*. As this is not only the last book in the Bible, and the final work remaining for our consideration, but is also the portion of Scripture in the analysis of which the literary element is found to be most prominent, it may be not amiss to review at this point what, in application to such a work, is implied in literary study, what is the literary factor in its interpretation.

We are dealing with a work of prophecy: at the outset the interpreter must free himself from the almost universal popular error, that in prophetic literature prediction of the future is to be expected. What is unveiled may be futurity; but the revelation may be, like the revelation to Moses in the mount, an unveiling of the ideal of things, the pattern of the true. The common misconception is in the present case assisted by certain phrases that occur in the title page[1] of the book — "the things which must shortly come to pass," — "for the time is at hand." But a careful reading will show that these words are to be understood, not as a part of the revelation, but as the writer's (or an editor's) comment upon the book. They are simply illustrations of an idea from which the greatest of the apostles were not free, but which nevertheless time has shown to be no part of their apostolic message — that the coming of the Lord and end of the world was immediately at hand.

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[1] Chapter i. 1–3.

Again, *Revelation* is a poem. We have seen[1] how great part of prophecy is poetry in the strictest sense — creative literature, with imaginative scenes and incidents used by the prophets as a vehicle for conveying the Divine message with which they feel themselves inspired. For reading such prophecy there is needed, not only intelligence, but also imagination; unless the inward eye has caught the visionary picture in all its fulness, the most acute interpretative power will be applying itself to the wrong matter. Accordingly, the interpreter of *Revelation* should have prepared himself by appreciation of the world's greatest poetry; he should have studied Milton and Dante, the rhapsodies in the books of Isaiah, of Joel, of Habakkuk. Above all he should have mastered the Visions of Zechariah: these, with their dream form, dream within dream, and visions rising one out of another like a series of dissolving views, make the nearest approach to the imaginative impressions of the New Testament apocalypse.

When the mental pictures have been fully realised they are found to be symbolic in their significance: the reader must come to them prepared by familiarity with figurative literature. I have already urged,[2] as a foundation principle in biblical symbolism, the recognition of the vision emblem as no more than the text of a discourse: the truth intended to be symbolised the prophet will convey by his words of comment. This principle must be applied even to the most extended visions. Thus, when Ezekiel has his Vision of Jerusalem in her Pollutions, we are not to understand that the eye of the prophet was miraculously opened to see what was actually going on in the Temple at Jerusalem at the very moment. So far from this being the case, as the vision progresses the prophet himself becomes a part of it: Ezekiel, by the banks of the Chebar, is commanded to prophesy to the idolaters in Jerusalem, and as (in his vision) he prophesies Pelatiah falls dead before his ministry. From beginning to end all that Ezekiel sees is an emblem — supernaturally presented — of the real truth: how the land and people of Jehovah are defiling themselves with foreign idolatries, and judgment is at the door. If this principle of interpretation is correct, it will be seen at once how important is its application to such a book as *Revelation*. Many readers look upon the apocalypse as a prophetic riddle: if only they can guess the enigmatic language, they think they will have learned the secret of the end of the world, or will be able to place their own age in a map of all time. But even if we assume that it is futurity which is being revealed, and if we suppose that we have construed the enigmatic sentences, even then what we have attained is, not the events themselves, but only an emblem text, a vision incident which prophecy may apply to its discussion of what is to come.

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[1] Above, page 123.

[2] Above, page 296.

We have seen in previous studies how structural analysis has an important place in interpretation. There are, in the case of *Revelation*, two points peculiarly characteristic of Hebrew literary form. One is obvious to every reader: the way in which sevenfold division and subdivision penetrates every part of the book. The other is at once more important and easier to miss. Our analysis of the rhapsody of Joel (to take the most prominent example) illustrated the tendency of Hebrew poetry to find its climax at the centre rather than at the end. In *Revelation* the same type of movement is exhibited, the central stage of the seven forming, as it were, the keystone of an arch.

4. SALVATION: THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD BECOMING THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST
xi. 19–xv. 4.

3. The Seven Trumpets: Judgment Imperfect and the Mystery of Prophecy
viii. 5–xi. 18.

5. The Seven Golden Bowls: Judgment Consummated and the Mystery of Babylon
xv. 5–xix. 4.

2. The Seven Seals: Judgment Potential
vi–viii. 4.

6. The Word of God: Judgment Enthroned
xix. 5–xx.

1. The Sealed Book and the Lamb
iv–v.

7. The Lamb's Bride, and the New Jerusalem
xxi–xxii. 5.

It is easy to see how important a bearing such structural analysis will have upon interpretation; and how one who has ignored it may be seeking at the end of the poem for the climax thought which he has passed by unobserved at the centre.

Yet another consideration must be borne in mind before we have completely stated the literary factor in the interpretation of the apocalypse. It is written that "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy": these words not only convey a truth of theology, but also indicate what is a notable literary feature of the book. *Revelation* is full of symbolism: but upon examination it will be found that scarcely a single symbol is new. The figurative ideas of the Old Testament prophets are borrowed, and transfigured in the borrowing: they are intensified, massed together, associated with new applications: so many prophetic gems combined in a diadem of light with which to crown a supreme prophecy. Now this use of borrowed materials is a distinguishing feature of that type of poetry which is called, in the strictest sense of the word, 'classical.' What we know as Homer has been built up out of ballad poetry which has otherwise perished. The Roman poets adapt Homeric details to a new legend, or reproduce the idyllic scenes of the Greek Theocritus scarcely veiled in their Italian dress. Dante in his turn echoes Virgil; Spenser will be found almost translating Tasso; Milton makes his phrases and incidents recall all his predecessors, with additional echoes from the poetry of the Bible. The classical poets thus form a sort of apostolic succession in literature, each resting his claim to poetic power on the use of what he has received from his predecessors. But if this echoing of past literature is a regular feature of one type of poetry, there has never been such an opportunity for it as in *The Book of Revelation*, where it ministers to the supremacy of the theme. The writer of this apocalypse seems to feel that no symbol can be sacred enough for his use unless it has been hallowed by associations with the prophecy of the past. There is thus a further burden laid upon the interpreter: when the symbol has been caught, he must draw in all its echoes from the prophetic literature of the old dispensation, before he has attained the fulness of its significance.

We have before us, then, a sevenfold vision, prefaced by addresses to the seven churches, with an epilogue of seven last words; the seven visions rising one out of the other like dissolving views; all made up of visible emblems which are echoes from the prophecy of the past; while in the central vision of the seven is to be sought the foundation truth upon which the whole is to rest.

The prologue gives but a flash of the glory which is to come. The seer is in the lonely isle of Patmos, as Ezekiel had been lonely by the river Chebar. Suddenly the ushering trumpet arrests his attention, and there is before his gaze such a form as Daniel had once seen: the head and hair white as wool, the golden girdle, the feet of burnished brass. All about are symbols of old prophecy intensified: the golden candlestick, which had figured to Zechariah the completion of the Jewish church, has become seven candlesticks for the multiplied churches of the new dispensation; the morning stars, which had been world rulers in *Job*, are now the angels of the seven churches. What is spoken takes form from an ancient prophecy: as Amos was commissioned with words to the seven guilty nations — particular denunciations of each, with recurring formulæ of doom — so John is to transmit the particular messages to the seven churches of Asia, while each message is framed round with refrains, or with fragments of the vision which is coming.[1]

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[1] Allusions to Old Testament symbolism in *Revelation* are too numerous to be indicated here by references. This element of interpretation is worked out in detail in the *St. John* volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible*, pages 196–215.

When we pass from the prologue to the actual revelation, heaven itself has opened: all has vanished except a region where is neither space nor time. What Ezekiel saw in its moving radiancy is before us in its eternal splendour of repose: the Throne of Deity, rising out of the crystalline sea. He who sits on the throne is lost in impenetrable brightness, fringed with rainbow glory. Around are gradations of power, elders grouped about the ancient of days. Powers of nature are there: thunders and lightnings and voices proceeding out of the throne. There, too, are powers of the mechanism that executes: what Ezekiel saw as wheel within wheel here appears as seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, and these Zechariah's vision enables us to understand as emanations from heaven that become ministries on earth. Powers of life are added: no single creature of earth is seen, but there are wings that wave, eyes that flash, forms that distinguish. And the whole is one ceaseless round of adoration, stretching from eternity to eternity.

But the vision modifies itself to the eye of the seer, and in the hands of him that sits upon the throne is a book, a sealed book, a book sealed with seven seals. In the intensity of dream emotion the seer is weeping that none is found worthy to unseal the book, when a comforting voice cries that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is worthy to open the mystery. This echo from the old Blessing of Jacob is still in our ears, when there follows a great surprise: no lion, but "a Lamb, standing as though it had been slain." We recall at once the central vision of the Isaiahan rhapsody — one led as a lamb to the slaughter, and the Baptist's application of this to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The adoration of heaven is transferred to this new figure, in the sevenfold blessing that attributes the power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing to the Lamb that hath been slain; while a new symbol is seen — bowls full of rising incense, which the seer knows to be the prayers of the saints ascending to heaven. So the first vision dissolves into the second, with but two ideas standing prominent: the seals of mystery, and the slain Lamb through whom alone they may be opened.

With the second vision we have the unsealing of the seven seals. Powers of judgment appear, but the judgment is not to be seen in execution. There is an echo of Jeremiah's refrain:[1] —

> Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for captivity, to captivity.

The visible emblems are from Zechariah's vision of horses — red, sorrel, and white — that were to be executing ministries on earth. But here each colour has a mystic significance. As the first seal is opened there rides forth the white horse; the bow and crown proclaim its rider the conqueror that takes captive. As the second seal is opened we see the red horse of war and slaughter. With the third seal is seen the rider on the black horse: the balance he holds in his hand has been familiar in Ezekiel's prophecies as symbol of the careful weighing of food in famine. There follows, at the fourth seal, the pale horse and his rider Death, Hades attending. When the fifth seal is opened we hear — as in Zechariah's visions — the souls beneath the altar of martyrdom crying, How long? To each individual is given the white robe, but for their common judgment they are to wait until their martyr brethren shall have been fulfilled. With the opening of the sixth seal we have gathered from all over the field of prophetic literature the signs that speak the very moment preceding doom: Joel's darkened sun and blood-red moon; Isaiah's folding of the heavens like a scroll, mountains and islands fleeing out of their places, great and small hiding in caves and rocks; Hosea's cries to mountains and hills to make a cover from the coming wrath. But at this point — with an echo from Ezekiel's vision of Jerusalem — the coming doom is held back; not a breath is to blow upon the earth until the servants of God have been sealed on their foreheads. In orderly ritual the sealing proceeds, of one tribe twelve thousand, and of another and another. At last the bonds of ritual are broken through by a great surprise — a multitude that no man can number, out of every nation, tribe, people, tongue: all arrayed in white robes, with palms in their hands. It is told how these are they that came out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. The words of description mingle with prophetic strains that once glorified the exiles returning to Zion:[1] —

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[1] Chapter xv. 2.

> They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life.

Now only may the seventh seal be opened. There falls upon the heavenly scene a great silence: the silence of expectation, a pointing ever onward, as vision succeeds vision, the whole approaching the central climax.

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[1] Compare *Isaiah* xlix. 10.

The third vision displays the seven angels with the seven trumpets of doom: we instinctively think of the falling walls of Jericho, of the blast which ushered in Joel's day of darkness and terror. Now judgment is to advance: and yet at every point we are to see a mystic limitation and imperfection of judgment. With the sounding of the first trumpet the plagues of Egypt appear intensified — hail and fire, mingled with blood, are cast upon the earth: and yet but a third part of the earth is burnt up. The second angel sounds, and the burning mountain imagined by Jeremiah is cast into the sea: yet but a third part of what the sea holds is destroyed. With the sounding of the third trumpet Jeremiah's star Wormwood falls upon the third part of the rivers and fountains, carrying bitterness in its train; another sounding, and a third part of the heavenly bodies is darkened. Four times judgment has descended from above; when the next angel sounds his trumpet judgment breaks out from beneath. The abyss of fire opens, and in the spreading clouds of smoke are involved clouds of such mystic locust hosts as Joel had seen in his vision: yet even these are restrained, that they may torment, but must not kill. With the sixth sounding judgment appears at Euphrates — mystic centre of the earth — and spreads along the four winds: but, though the number of the visionary horsemen is twice ten thousand times ten thousand, yet they are to exercise their power upon only the third part of men.

At this point the whole movement intensifies. The angel of strength is seen, arrayed in cloud, crowned with rainbow; his mighty stride takes in earth and sea; when he speaks, not trumpets, but the seven thunders, utter their voices. Yet there is again a restraining: the seer is to seal up and write not what the thunders utter. The sense of restraint is the greater, since already it has been sworn, by Him that liveth forever, that, as soon as the seventh angel shall have sounded his trumpet, then is finished the mystery of God according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets. But — with an echo from the experience of Ezekiel — the seer takes from the angel the little book, sweet as honey in the mouth, but bitter when swallowed; he must "prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." Mystic words are thus spoken, through which are breaking memories of the past: the measuring reed of Ezekiel's vision Temple, the olive trees and candlesticks of Zechariah; power to shut up heaven that it rain not, as in the days of Elijah; powers to turn water into blood, as in the days of Moses; martyrdoms in the Jerusalem that killeth the prophets; breath entering into dry bones such as Ezekiel saw in his vision; ascents like Elijah's to heaven. It is gradually borne in upon our minds how this third vision, with its mysterious limitations of judgment, is bound up with the imperfect glory of the law and the prophets, and of those who without them that were to come could not be made perfect. Just when we are filled with this thought is heard the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and all heaven shouts the master idea of the whole Revelation: —

> THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD IS BECOME THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST: AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER!

The mystery of prophecy is to be unsealed in Christ.

We thus pass to the central section and climax of the Revelation; other visions are visions of judgment, but this keystone of the arch is to be called by the name of Salvation, and it presents the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of Christ. The seven visions, it must be understood, are not bound together by temporal succession; each displays a world process complete in itself. So this contest between the world and Christ must be traced through all its seven stages. The first origin of this contest is symbolised where we have Isaiah's sign of the woman with child presented in glorified form, while over against her is the great dragon — the serpent of *Genesis* — intensified with monstrous heads and diadems, waiting to devour what shall be born. The second phase is a contest in heaven: Michael and his angels warring with the dragon, who draws with him a third part of the stars of heaven as he is cast to the earth. Now it becomes a contest on earth, the dragon persecuting the woman who had borne the mystic child; the primitive imagery, that figured the perpetual contest between the winding serpent of the water and the land it encircles, which more than once is the subject of allusions in *The Book of Job*, is here echoed in the earth opening its mouth to swallow up the river cast by the dragon against the woman. For a fourth phase of the contest the opposition of the world to Christ takes the form of organised and concentrated power, the brute force of such beasts as Daniel saw rising out of the sea: details like the seven heads give vague hints of actual world powers that may illustrate this type of opposition. A stage further is seen in the beast with "two horns like unto a lamb." Here the symbolism of the two sides of the contest has become entangled, and we think of the spiritual making common cause with worldly power, in superstition or false religion; the new monster is a beast-like *prophet* of the beast. At the sixth stage are seen the followers of the Lamb arrayed for warfare: they are sealed with the mystic name, and sing the song none know but themselves; it is as the sound of thunder for fulness, yet he who listens hears it as the voice of harpers harping with their harps. Voices of expectancy usher in the final phase of the vision: the white cloud, and on it one like to a son of man; the casting to the earth of the sickle in token of the hour of reaping. But Joel's figure of the sickle is insufficient: with echoes from *Isaiah* we see the vintage gathered into the winepress of the wrath of God, and the stream of blood from this winepress reaches to the bridles of the horses. Now the crystalline sea flushes with the hue of victory, and the vision culminates in the 'Song of Moses and the Lamb.' When the first deliverance of a people of God, beside the Red Sea, has thus been joined to the final triumph of the saints, the whole range of salvation has been traversed.

The descending movement of the arch is a tribute to the spirit of symmetry pervading Hebrew poetry: whatever has been left unfinished must now be gathered up and brought to completion. The fifth vision supplements the third: there judgment was seen imperfect, now, the key of all world mystery having been given, judgment may be consummated. The seven trumpets are replaced by the seven golden bowls — what in the old prophecies appeared as the cup of the Lord's fury. Four times judgment again descends from above; it comes again from beneath, and at central Euphrates: but from first to last there is no note of limit or imperfection. As the seventh bowl is poured forth there is a cry, It is done: and the world process of this vision is expounded as the Mystery of Babylon. The vivid details begin with the actual Babylon of history, theme of so many prophetic dooms; soon there intermingle pictures of maritime glory and weeping merchants that recall the doom of Tyre; when other hints follow, the suggestion is clear that the prophetic Babylon covers every power that exalts itself against the kingship of Christ.

As the fifth vision points back to the third, so does the sixth to the second; judgment there was but potential, now it is to be seen enthroned. We have now but one horse, for he who rides is the Word of God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords: he hath another name none can know but himself. Before his victorious course all forms of opposition disappear. At last is seen the great white throne, and (as in Daniel's vision) the opening of books of doom: earth and heaven flee away, the dead are judged, Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire — the death to which Death itself is destined.

The opening of the Revelation had displayed the eternal repose of Deity, without one disturbing ripple of the mystery that craves solution. At the close we return to a vision of peace — the peace that lies on the further side of judgment. There is new heaven and new earth; a new Jerusalem descending from above. Ezekiel's vision, with its many symmetries, provides fit framework for the new commonwealth of God. But fairer figures are added. From the Isaiahan rhapsody comes the thought of Jerusalem as the bride of the Lamb, adorned as spouse for Him who is now to tabernacle with men.

From the same source is the vision of glorious purity — the city's foundations of precious stones, her gates of pearl, her pavement of transparent gold. Ezekiel has furnished the figure of the water of life proceeding out of the throne to water the city. One final symbol comes as echo from the earliest symbol of *Genesis:* transplanted from Eden the tree of life spreads healing leaves beside the river. In a brightness that knows no night, and no sun but the Lamb himself, the visions of the Revelation reach their close.

There remains the epilogue of the Seven Last Words. The central word of the seven is this: —

> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

This word is the unifying thought of the whole book: nay, of the whole Bible. *The Revelation of St. John* is the meeting ground of the Old and New Testament; what binds the long succession of books — by so many authors, of so many different ages — into a unity is expressed by the saying that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The whole of prophetic literature yields its imaginative figures to adorn this final Revelation; all history is made one by the central thought of the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of Christ.

APPENDICES

GENERAL REMARKS

It must be understood that these appendices are dealing solely with the literary study of Scripture as defined in this work. For theological or historic studies, students should seek information from authorities with whom they are in agreement: literary study is common ground between all schools of thought.

An essential of literary study is a properly printed text, which presents literary structure clearly to the eye. This, which is taken for granted in all other literature, is not given by versions of the Bible in ordinary use. To meet this difficulty *The Modern Reader's Bible* has been prepared, which prints the words of the Revised Version in full structural form, with introductions and notes. The whole Bible, with part of the Apocrypha, is covered by twenty-one volumes, which may be procured separately, or all together.[1] The volumes are as follows: —

Genesis — The Exodus — Deuteronomy — The Judges — The Kings — The Chronicles.

Proverbs — Ecclesiasticus — Ecclesiastes and Wisdom of Solomon — Job.

The Psalms [two volumes] — Biblical Idyls [containing *Solomon's Song*, *Ruth*, *Esther*, and *Tobit*].

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[1] Macmillan, London and New York. Price of each volume: (English), cloth, 2/6; (American), cloth, 50 cents, leather, 60 cents. In the American edition the twenty-one volumes may be procured in a case; price: (cloth), $10; (leather), $12.60. [Note: There are three additional volumes (see below, pages 353 and 354) not included in this case.]

Isaiah — Jeremiah — Ezekiel — Daniel and the Minor Prophets.
St. Luke and St. Paul [two volumes] — St. John — St. Matthew, etc.

Of the ordinary versions, the Revised is essential for literary study. It inherits, and often enhances, the beauty of phraseology which distinguished King James's Version, and further, gives a connectedness of thought which was little sought by the earlier translators. If this version be used, it will be well to mark with a lead pencil in the margin the divisions of literary works in Scripture, such as may be collected from Appendix I.

Apart from formal study, it is suggested that in ordinary reading of Scripture selections should be made with the assistance of Appendix I (or similar reading lists), and not by the misleading divisions of chapter and verse in the old versions.

APPENDIX I

BIBLE READING

ARRANGED TO ACCOMPANY THE PRESENT VOLUME

TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AS PRESENTED BY THEMSELVES

*** This is covered by six volumes of *The Modern Reader's Bible:* viz. *Genesis* — *The Exodus* — *Deuteronomy* — *The Judges* — *The Kings* — *The Chronicles.* — The Stories of the Exile are in two other volumes: *Daniel* — *Biblical Idyls.* — For the suggested Epilogue the *Isaiah* volume is necessary.

Prologue

A Prologue to the Old Testament is made by *Genesis* i–xi. (Pages 23–25.)

Genesis;

or, The Origin of the Chosen Nation. (Pages 25–30.)

HISTORY	STORY
Genesis xii–l. Mark off as DOCUMENTS: Genealogies [xxii. 20–24; xxv. 1–6; xxv. 12–20; xxxv. 23–26; xxxvi] — Census [xlvi. 8–27].	The Call of Abraham [xii. 1–9] — Sarai and Pharaoh [xii. 10–20] — The Parting of Abraham and Lot and the Raid on Sodom [xiii–xiv] — Sarai, Hagar, and the Promised Seed [xv–xvii] — The Judgment on Sodom [xviii–xix. 28] — Abimelech and Sarah [xx] — Birth of Isaac and Casting off of

Ishmael [xxi. 1–21] — Offering of Isaac [xxii. 1–19] — Burial of Sarah [xxiii] — Wooing of Rebekah [xxiv] — The Stolen Blessing [xxvii. 1–40] — Flight of Jacob [xxvii. 41–xxviii] — How Jacob served under Laban [xxix–xxxii. 2] — Meeting of Jacob and Esau [xxxii. 3–xxxiii] — Joseph and his Brethren [xxxvii. 2–36, continued xxxix. 1–xlvi. 7, and xlvi. 28–xlvii. 12] — Blessing and Death of Jacob [xlvii. 28–l].

The Exodus;

or, The Migration of the Chosen Nation to the Land of Promise. (Pages 30–40.)

HISTORY	STORY
Exodus — *Leviticus* — *Numbers*. Mark off as DOCUMENTS: Census [*Exodus* i. 1–5] — Genealogy [vi. 14–27] — Ordinances of the Passover and the Firstborn [xii. 1–20 and xii. 40–xiii. 16] — Law of the Ten Commandments [xix. 3–xx. 21] — Book of the Covenant [xx. 22–xxiv. 11] — Tabernacle Specifications [xxiv. 12–xxxi and xxxv–xl] — Covenant of the Second Table [xxxii–xxxiv].	Moses and the Plagues of Egypt [*Exodus* i. 8–vi. 13, continued vi. 28–xi and xii. 21–39 and xiii. 17–xv. 21].

Law of Oblations [*Leviticus* i–vii] — Law of Consecration of Priests [viii–x] — Law of Purification and Atonement [xi–xvi] — Covenant of Holiness [xvii–xxvi] — Law of Vows and Tithes [xxvii]. Census and Ordering of the Tribes [*Numbers* i–ii] — Census and Service of Levites [iii–iv] — Laws [v–vi] — Census of Oblations at Dedication of Tabernacle [vii] — Ritual of Priestly Service [viii] — Ordinance of Supplementary Passover [ix. 1–14] — Laws of Offerings [xv. 1–31] — Judgment of the Sabbath Breaker [xv. 32–36] — Law of Fringes [xv. 37–41] — Judgment of Korah and Law of Priests and Levites [xvi–xviii] — Ritual of the Heifer of Purification [xix] — Census [xxvi] — Law of the Inheritance of Daughters [xxvii. 1–11] — Calendar of Sacred Rites [xxviii–xxix] — Law of Vows [xxx] — Law of Spoils [xxxi] — Allotment of Tribes on the East of Jordan [xxxii] — Itinerary [xxxiii. 1–49] — Allotment of Boundaries in Canaan [xxxiii. 50–xxxiv] — Allotment of Cities for Levites and Cities of Refuge [xxxv] — Law of the Marriage of Heiresses [xxxvi].	The Witness of Balaam [*Numbers* xxii. 2–xxiv]

Deuteronomy;

or, The Farewell of Moses: Orations and Songs. (Pages 40–45.)

First Oration: Moses' Announcement of his Deposition [i. 6–iv. 40] — Second Oration: The Delivery of the Covenant to the Levites and Elders [v. 1–xi. 32] — Third Oration: At the Rehearsal of the Blessing and the Curse [xxviii] — Fourth Oration: The Covenant in the Land of Moab [xxix. 2–xxxi. 8] — The Song of Moses [xxxii. 1–43] — The Last Words and Passing of Moses [xxxiii. 2–xxxiv].

All the rest of the book may be marked off as prefatory and connecting matter, including [xii–xxvi] The Book of the Covenant. — In the orations certain passages are footnotes [ii. 10–12; ii. 20–23; iii. 9, 11, 14; x. 6–9; compare i. 2].

The Judges;

or, Transition to a Secular Monarchy. (Pages 45–56.)

History	Story
Joshua.	The Spies and the Woman of Jericho [*Joshua* ii] — The Passage of the Jordan [iii–iv] — The Siege of Jericho [v. 13–vi] — Siege of Ai and Sin of Achan [vii–viii] — Embassy of the Gibeonites [ix] — League of the Five Kings [x. 1–27] — Joshua's Farewell [xxiii–xxiv].
Mark off as Documents: Catalogue of Conquests [*Joshua* xii] — Allotment of the Tribes [xiii–xxii].	
Judges.	Ehud's Assassination of Eglon [*Judges* iii. 12–30] — War of Deborah and Barak against Sisera [iv–v] —

	Gideon and the Midianites [vi–viii. 28] — Crowning of Abimelech [viii. 29–ix] — Jephthah and the Ammonites [x. 6–xii. 6] — Adventures of Samson [xiii. 2–xvi] — Micah's Images and the Danish Migration [xvii–xviii] — The Benjamite War [xix–xxi] — *The Book of Ruth.*
I Samuel to *II Samuel* i.	Birth of Samuel [*I Samuel* i–ii. 11] — Call of Samuel and Dooming of Eli [ii. 12–iv] — The Ark and the Philistines [v–vii. 1] — The Anointing of Saul and Retirement of Samuel [viii–xii] — The Raid on Michmash [xiii. 15–xiv. 46] — The Amalekite War and Breach between Samuel and Saul [xv] — The Anointing of David [xvi. 1–13] — The Feud of Saul and David [*I Samuel* xvi. 14–*II Samuel* i].

The Kings and Prophets;

or, The Secular Government and the Prophetic Opposition. (Pages 56–69.)

HISTORY	STORY
Reigns of David and Solomon [*II Samuel* ii–*I Kings* xi]. Mark off as DOCUMENTS: Lists of Officers and Mighty Men [*II Samuel* xx. 23–26; xxiii. 8–39; *I Kings*	Nathan, David, and Bath-sheba [*II Samuel* xi. 2–xii. 25] — The Feud between David's Sons and the Revolt of Absalom [xiii–xx. 22] — Gad and the Numbering of the People [xxiv].

iv. 1–20] — Specification of the Temple and the Palace [*I Kings* vi–vii].	
The Divided Kingdom [*I Kings* xii–*II Kings* xvii] — the Kingdom of Judah to the Captivity [*II Kings* xviii–xxv].	The Man of God and the Old Prophet of Beth-el [*I Kings* xiii. 1–32] — The History of Elijah the Tishbite [*I Kings* xvii–xix, continued xxi, and *II Kings* i. 1–16, and ii. 1–18] — Ben-hadad, Ahab, and the Prophets [*I Kings* xx] — Micaiah and the Battle of Ramoth-Gilead [xxii. 1–38] — Stories of the Prophet Elisha [*II Kings* ii. 1–25, continued iii. 4–viii. 15 and xiii. 14–21].

The Exile. (Pages 70–75.)

NO HISTORY	STORY
	Daniel and the King's Meat [*Daniel* i] — The Dream of the Image and the Stone [ii] — The Story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego [iii] — The Dream of the Tree cut down [iv] — The Story of Belshazzar's Feast [v] — Daniel in the Den of Lions [vi] — The Story of Mordecai and Esther [*Esther*].

The Return;

or, Chronicles of the Jewish Church. (Pages 75–82.)

Documentary Chronicles	Narrative Chronicles
Chronicle I: Genealogy of the Families of Israel before and after the Captivity [*I Chronicles* i–ix. 34].	
	Chronicle II: The Kingdom of David and Solomon [*I Chronicles* ix. 35–*II Chronicles* ix]. — From this may be marked off as Documents: ix. 35–44; xi. 10–xii; xxiii–xxvii; *II Chronicles* iii. 1–v. 1.
	Chronicle III: The Kingdom of Judah to the Captivity [*II Chronicles* x–xxxvi].
	Chronicle IV: The Return under Zerubbabel and the Building of the Temple [*Ezra* i and iii–vi].
	Chronicle V: The Return of Ezra [*Ezra* vii–x]. — From this may be marked off as Documents: viii. 1–14; x. 18–44.
	Chronicle VI: The Return of Nehemiah and the Building of the Walls [*Nehemiah* i–vii. 5].
	Chronicle VII: The Covenant under Ezra and Nehemiah [*Nehemiah* vii. 73 (b)–x].

Chronicle VIII: Statistics of the Return [*Nehemiah* xi–xii. 26]. — Compare *Ezra* ii and *Nehemiah* vii. 6–73 (a).

Chronicle IX: Divers Acts of Nehemiah [*Nehemiah* xii. 27–xiii].

Epilogue

An Epilogue to Old Testament History is found in part of the Rhapsody of "Zion Redeemed." (Pages 82–88.)

Read Vision I [*Isaiah* xli–xlviii] — Vision II [xlix–l] — and part of Vision V [lv].

TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTER III

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AS PRESENTED BY ITSELF

⁂ This is covered by two volumes of *The Modern Reader's Bible:* viz. *St. Luke and St. Paul* (volumes 1 and 2).

Life of Jesus. (Pages 91–96.)

Birth and Early Life of Jesus [*Luke* i–iv. 13] — The Ministry in Galilee [iv. 14–ix. 50] — The Way to Jerusalem [ix. 51–xix. 28] — Jesus in Jerusalem, his Passion and Resurrection [xix. 29–xxiv].

The Acts of the Apostles. (Pages 96–118.)

1. Evangelisation of Palestine, and Conversion of the Gentiles [*Acts* i–xii].
2. Institution of the Missionary Journey and Opening of the Gospel to Europe [xiii–xviii. 11].
3. Institution of the Missionary Epistle [xviii. 12–xix. 20].
    After xviii. 11 read *Epistles to the Thessalonians.*
    After xviii. 23 read *Epistle to the Galatians.*
    After xix. 20 read *First Epistle to the Corinthians.*
4. St. Paul and Rome [*Acts* xix. 21–xxviii].
    After xx. 1 read *Second Epistle to the Corinthians.*
    After xx. 2 read *Epistle to the Romans.*
    After the end of *Acts* read the Epistles: *Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon; I* and *II Timothy, Titus.*
    Remaining Epistles: *Of Peter, Jude, Second and Third of John. — An Epistle to Hebrews.*

TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTER V

OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM

⁂ This is covered by four volumes of *The Modern Reader's Bible:* viz. *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Ecclesiastes and Wisdom*, *The Book of Job.*

The Proverbs. — A Miscellany in five parts: Sonnets on Wisdom [*Proverbs* i–ix] — Proverbs of Solomon [x–xxii. 16] — A Wisdom Epistle [xxii. 17–xxiv] — Proverbs of Solomon collected under Hezekiah [xxv–xxix] — Shorter Collections [xxx–xxxi]. (Pages 136–146.)

The Sonnets are: The Company of Sinners [i. 10–19] — Wisdom's Cry of Warning [i. 20–33] — Wisdom the Deliverer from Evil [ii] — The Commandment and the Reward [iii. 1–10] — Wisdom the Supreme Prize [iii. 11–20] — Wisdom and Security [iii. 21–26] — Wisdom and Perversity [iii. 27–35] — The Tradition of Wisdom [iv. 1–9] — The Two Paths [iv. 10–19] — Wisdom and Health [iv. 20–27] — The Strange Woman [v] — Suretiship [vi. 1–5] — The Sluggard [vi. 6–11] — A Pair of Sonnets: The Sower of Discord [vi. 12–19] — Adultery the Supreme Folly [vi. 20–35] — Wisdom and the Strange Woman [vii–viii] — The House of Wisdom and the House of Folly [ix] — Wine and Woe [xxiii. 29–35] — The Field of the Slothful [xxiv. 30–34] — The Unsearchableness of God [xxx. 1–4] — An Evil Generation [xxx. 11–14] — The Virtuous Woman [xxxi. 10–31].

Number Sonnets of Agur [xxx. 7–9; 15–16; 18–19; 21–23; 24–28; 29–31]. — All the rest of *The Book of Proverbs* is made up of brevities, such as proverbs, epigrams, etc.

Ecclesiasticus: or, The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach. — A Miscellany in five books. Book I [i–xxiii] — Preface and Book II [xxiv–xxxiii. 15] — Preface and Book III [xxxiii. 16–xxxix. 11] — Preface and Book IV [xxxix. 12–xlii. 14] — Book V [xlii. 15–l. 24] — Epilogue [l from verse 25] — Author's Preface [li]. (Pages 136–146.)

Sonnets are: Wisdom and the Fear of the Lord [i. 1–20] — True and False Fear [ii. 7–18] — Fools and the Dead [xxii. 11–12] — Watchfulness of Lips and Heart [xxii. 27–xxiii. 6] — Women Bad and Good [xxvi. 7–18] — The Fearers of the Lord [xxxiv. 13–17] — A Pair of Sonnets: A Garden of Blessings [xl. 11–27] — On Death [xli. 1–4].

Among the Essays are: Honour to Parents [iii. 1–16] — Meekness [iii. 17–28] — Consideration for High and Low [iv. 1–10] — Wisdom's Way with her Children [iv. 11–19] — True and False Shame [iv. 20–28] — Friendship [vi. 5–17] — Pursuit of Wisdom [vi. 18–37] — Household Precepts [vii. 19–36] — Adaptation of Behaviour to Various Sorts of Men [viii–ix. 16] — Wisdom and Government [ix. 17–x. 5] — Pride and True Greatness [x. 6–xi. 6] — Prosperity and Adversity from the Lord [xi. 11–28] — Choice of Company [xi. 29–xiii. 24] — Niggardliness [xiv. 3–19] — The Pursuer of Wisdom and his Reward [xiv. 20–xv. 10] — Free Will [xv. 11–20] — No Safety for Sinners in Numbers [xvi. 1–23] — God's Work of Creation and Restoration [xvi. 24–xviii. 14] — Against Gossip [xix. 4–17] — Wisdom and its Counterfeits [xix. 20–xx. 13] — The Discipline of the Mouth [xxiii. 7–15] — Retribution and Vengeance [xxvii. 25–xxviii. 11] — On the Tongue [xxviii. 12–26] — On Lending and Suretiship [xxix. 1–20] — The Blessing of a House of One's Own [xxix. 21–28] — Chastisement of Children [xxx. 1–13] — On Health [xxx. 14–25] — On Riches [xxxi. 1–11] — On Feasting [xxxi. 12–xxxii. 13] — On Dreams [xxxiv. 1–8] — On Sacrifices [xxxiv. 18–xxxv] — On Wives [xxxvi. 21–26] — On Counsel and Counsellors [xxxvii. 7–26] — Disease and Physicians [xxxvii. 27–xxxviii. 15] — Mourning for the Dead [xxxviii. 16–23] — The Wisdom of Business and the Wisdom of Leisure [xxxviii. 24–xxxix. 11] — The Burden of Life [xl.

1-10] — Encomium on the Works of the Lord [xlii. 15-xliii] — Praise of Famous Men [xliv-l. 24].

The rest of *Ecclesiasticus* is made up of epigrams, maxims, short sayings, etc.

Ecclesiastes; or, The Preacher. — A Series of five essays, with miscellaneous sayings. (Pages 146-155.)

Prologue: All is Vanity [i. 2-11].
Essay I: Solomon's Search for Wisdom [i. 12-ii].
Essay II: The Philosophy of Times and Seasons [iii. 1-iv. 8].
[Miscellaneous Maxims of Life.[1]]
Essay III: The Vanity of Desire [v. 10-vi. 12].
[Miscellaneous Paradoxes of Life.[1]]
Essay IV: The Search for Wisdom, with Notes by the Way [vii. 23-ix. 16].
[Miscellaneous Proverbs of Life.[1]]
Essay V: Life as a Joy shadowed by the Vanity of the Days to Come [xi. 7-xii. 7].
Epilogue: All is Vanity: Fear God [xii. 8-14].

The Wisdom of Solomon, in the Apocrypha. — A Series of five Discourses. (Pages 155-164.)

Discourse I: Singleness of Heart [i. 1-11].
Discourse II: Immortality and the Covenant with Death [i. 12-vi. 11].
Discourse III: Solomon's Winning of Wisdom [vi. 12-ix].
Discourse IV: The World saved through Wisdom [x-xi. 5].
Discourse V: Judgments on the Wicked turned to Blessings on God's People [xi. 5-xix].

The Book of Job: A Dramatic Poem framed in an Epic Story. (Pages 164-186.)

Story Prologue [i-ii].
Dramatic Poem: Job's Curse [iii] — First Cycle of Speeches

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[1] These miscellaneous sections [iv. 9-v. 9; vii. 1-22; ix. 17-xi. 6] should be omitted in studying the argument of the book.

[iv–xiv] — Second Cycle [xv–xxi [1]] — Third Cycle [2] [xxii–xxx] — Job's Oath of Vindication [xxxi] — Interposition of Elihu [xxxii–xxxvii] — Divine Intervention [xxxviii–xlii. 6]. Story Epilogue [xlii from verse 7].

TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTER VI

NEW TESTAMENT WISDOM

⁂ This is covered by two volumes of *The Modern Reader's Bible;* viz. *St. Matthew*, etc., and *St. John.*

The Epistle of St. James. — A Miscellany of Christian Wisdom. (Pages 187–193.)

The Essays or Discourses are: On the Sources of the Evil and the Good in us [i. 12–27] — On Respect of Persons [ii. 1–13] — Faith and Works [ii. 14–26] — The Responsibility of Speech [iii. 1–12] — The Earthly Wisdom and the Wisdom from Above [iii. 13–18] — On Worldly Pleasures [iv. 1–10] — The Judgment to Come [iv. 13–v. 18]. — The rest of the epistle is made up of brief epigrams, maxims, or paradoxes.

[NOTE: **The First Epistle of St. John** is perhaps best read as a Miscellany of Christian Wisdom. The divisions would be: i. 1–4, 5–7; i. 8–ii. 2; ii. 3–6, 7–11, 12–14, 15–17, 18–28; ii. 29–iii. 12; iii. 13–23; iii. 24–iv. 6; iv. 7–21; v. 1–5, 6–13, 14–17, 18–21.]

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[1] It is best in Chapter xxi to treat certain passages as interruptions: verse 16 Eliphaz — verse 19 (a) Bildad — verse 22 Zophar. [See *The Modern Reader's Bible*, volume *Job*, pages 127–132.]

[2] The division of speeches needs rearrangement in the Third Cycle, including a transference of xxvi. 2–4 to the beginning of xxvii. The speeches then come out thus: Eliphaz [xxii] — Job [xxiii–xxiv] — Bildad [xxv, continued xxvi. 5–14] — Job [xxvi. 2–4, continued xxvii. 2–6] — Zophar [xxvii. 7–xxviii] — Job [xxix–xxx]. — The question is fully discussed in *The Modern Reader's Bible*, volume *Job*, pages 125–127.

The Gospel of St. Matthew. — A Life of Jesus in the spirit of [Hebrew] Wisdom. (Pages 194–209.)

1. Birth of Jesus
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2. John the Baptist, and appearance of Jesus in public
   iii–iv. 16
3. Opening of the Ministry of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount
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4. First Impressions: Gathering of Disciples and Hints of Antagonism
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5. Organisation of Apostles and the Sevenfold Commission ix. 35–xi. 1	6. Growing Isolation of Jesus and his Ministry xi. 2–xii
7. The Public Parable and the Private Interpretation xiii. 1–52	8. The Greater Miracles and the Growing Antagonism xiii. 53–xvi. 12
9. Recognition of the Kingdom by the Disciples and Questions arising thereon xvi. 13–xx	10. Entry into Jerusalem and Breach with the Ruling Classes xxi–xxiii
11. Discourse to the Disciples: Revelation of the End xxiv–xxv	12. Passion and Resurrection of Jesus xxvi–xxviii

The Gospel of St. John.—A Life of Jesus in the spirit of [Greek] Wisdom. (Pages 209–218.):

Prologue [i. 1–18] — Earlier Signs and Witness of Jesus [i. 19–iv] — Signs and Witness to the Jews [v–xii] — Signs and Witness to the Disciples [xiii–xvii] — The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus [xviii–xx] — Epilogue: A Personal Reminiscence [xxi].

TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTER VII

LYRIC POETRY OF THE BIBLE

⁂ This is covered by three volumes of *The Modern Reader's Bible;* viz. *The Psalms* (2 volumes), *Biblical Idyls.*

1. **Odes, Anthems, Songs.** (Pages 219–238.)

Odes: Song of Moses and Miriam [*Exodus* xv] — Deborah's Song [*Judges* v] — A Processional Ode [*Psalm* lxviii].

National Anthems: *Psalms* cxxxvi, cv, lxxviii, cvi: compare cvii.

Occasional: Inauguration of Jerusalem [*Psalms* xxx; xxiv. 1–6, 7–10; cxxxii; ci] — compare Sennacherib Songs [*Psalms* xlvi, xlviii, lxxvi].

Ritual Hymns and Anthems: Festal [*Psalms* xxxiii, xlv, xlvii, lxvii, lxxxi, xcv–c, cxxxv, cxlv–cl] — War [*Psalms* xx–xxi, lix, lx and cviii] — Votive [*Psalms* xxxiv, lxvi, xcii, cxi–cxviii] — Liturgies [*Psalms* xxv, xl, lxv, lxxxvi].

Songs and Meditations: Of Deliverance [*Psalms* xviii, cxxxviii, cxlii] — Of Nature and Providence [*Psalms* xxix, ciii–civ] — Of Judgment [*Psalms* lii, lviii, lxxv, lxxxiii, xciv] — Of Trust and Consecration [*Psalms* xi, xvi, lxii, xc, xci].

On Set Themes: The Tree and the Chaff [*Psalm* i] — Song of the LORD's Anointed [ii] — Man the Viceroy of God [viii] — The Consecrated Life [xv] — The Heavens above and the Law within [xix] — Under the Protection of Jehovah [xxiii] — Evil Unbounded and Infinite Good [xxxvi] — The Prosperity of the Wicked [xxxvii] — Man that is in Honour: a Parable [xlix] — A Dynasty of Righteousness [lxxii] — The Mystery of Prosperous Wickedness [lxxiii] — Zion Mother of Nations [lxxxvii] — Jehovah's Immovable Throne [xciii] — King and Priest [cx] — The Law of the LORD [cxix].

Songs of Ascents, or Pilgrim's Hymnbook [*Psalms* cxx–cxxxiv: compare *Psalm* lxxxiv].

2. **Elegies.** (Pages 238–239.)

Personal: David's Lament [*II Samuel* i] — *Psalm* lxxxviii.

National: *Psalms* xliv, lxxiv, lxxix, lxxx, lxxxix, cxxxvii. — Especially: *The Book of Lamentations.*

3 **Monologues and Dramatic Lyrics.** (Pages 239–248.)

Monodies of Experience: *Psalms* xxxii, xxxix, xli, xlii–xliii, lxxvii.

Prayers and Litanies: *Psalms* iv, v, xiii, xvii, xxvi, xxxv, xxxviii, li, lv, lxi, lxiii, lxiv, lxx, cii, cix, cxl, cxli, cxliii.

Dramatic Lyrics: *Psalms* iii, vi, xii, xxii, xxviii, liv, lvi, lvii, lxix, lxxi, cxxxix.

Dramatic Anthems: *Psalms* ix–x, xxvii, lxxxv, cviii, cxliv.

Visions: *Psalms* vii, l, liii (= xiv), lxxxii.

Lyric Idyl: *Solomon's Song* [in seven idyls]: 1. The Wedding Day (i. 2–ii. 7) — 2. The Bride's Reminiscences of the Courtship (ii. 8–iii. 5) — 3. The Day of Betrothal (iii. 6–v. 1) — 4. The Bride's Troubled Dream (v. 2–vi. 3) — 5. The King's Meditation on his Bride (vi. 4–vii. 9) — 6. The Bride's Longing for her Home on Lebanon (vii. 10-viii. 4) — 7. The Renewal of Love in the Vineyard of Lebanon (viii. 5–14). (Pages 248–257.)

TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTERS VIII AND IX

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

⁂ This is covered by four volumes of *The Modern Reader's Bible;* viz. *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, etc.

Doom Prophecies. (Pages 260–266.)

Nineveh: *Nahum.* — Assyria: *Isaiah* xiv. 24–27.

Babylon: *Isaiah* xiii–xiv. 23; *Jeremiah* l–li.

Egypt: *Isaiah* xix; *Jeremiah* xlvi. 3–12 and 14–28; *Ezekiel* xxix–xxxii.

Tyre and Zidon: *Isaiah* xxiii; *Ezekiel* xxvi–xxviii.

Philistia: *Isaiah* xiv. 28–32; *Jeremiah* xlvii; *Ezekiel* xxv. 15–17.

Damascus: *Isaiah* xvii. 1–11; *Jeremiah* xlix. 23–27.

Moab: *Isaiah* xv–xvi; *Jeremiah* xlviii; *Ezekiel* xxv. 8–11.

Edom: *Jeremiah* xlix. 7–22; *Ezekiel* xxv. 12–14; *Obadiah*.
Ammon: *Jeremiah* xlix. 1–6; *Ezekiel* xxv. 1–7.
Others: *Isaiah* xvii. 12–14; xviii; xx; *Jeremiah* xlix. 28–39 — especially: The Prophetic Watchman [*Isaiah* xxi–xxii. 14] — and *Zephaniah*.

Rhapsodies or Spiritual Dramas. (Pages 267–284.)

Full Rhapsodies: The Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed[1] [*Isaiah* xl–lxvi] — Of Judgment [*Isaiah* xxiv–xxvii] — Of Salvation [*Isaiah* xxxiii] — Of the Drought [*Jeremiah* xiv–xv] — The Yearning of God [*Hosea* xi–xiv. 8] — Of the Judgment to Come [*Amos* from i. 3] — Of the Locust Plague [*Joel*] — The Lord's Controversy before the Mountains [*Micah* vi. 1–8] — The Lord's Cry and the Man of Wisdom [*Micah* vi. 9–vii] — Of the Chaldeans [*Habakkuk*].

Rhapsodic Discourses: *Isaiah* viii. 9–ix. 7; x. 5–xii; *Jeremiah* ii–vi; *Micah* i. 2–v; *Zechariah* ix–xi. 3. — Compare *Zephaniah*, *Nahum*, and doom prophecies in general.

Prophetic Story. (Pages 304–306; compare 56–57.)

The Book of Jonah, in literary classification, goes with the stories of Elijah and other prophets figuring in the historical books. The revelation is made, not by discourse, but by the prophet's experience and action.

Prophetic Ministry. (Pages 285–311.)

Under the Kings: *Isaiah* — *Micah* — *Hosea* — *Amos* — *Zechariah* xi. 4–17.
Siege of Jerusalem: *Jeremiah* — *Zechariah* xii–xiv.
Under the Exile: *Ezekiel* — *Daniel*.
After the Return: *Haggai* — *Zechariah* i–viii — *Malachi*.

Divisions of the longer books. (Pages 285–301.)

Isaiah: i–vi General Prophecies — vii–x. 4 The Sign Immanuel — x. 5–xii Assyrian Invasion — xiii–xxvii A Cycle of Dooms — xxviii–xxxv Judgment and Restoration — xxxvi–xxxix Ministry under Hezekiah — xl–lxvi Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed.

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[1] This Rhapsody divides thus: Prelude [xl. 1–11] — Vision I: The Servant of Jehovah Delivered [xl. 12–xlviii] — Vision II: The Servant of Jehovah Awakened [xlix–l] — Vision III: The Awakening of Zion [li–lii. 12] — Vision IV: The Servant of Jehovah Exalted [lii. 13–liii] — Vision V: Songs of Zion Exalted [liv–lv] — Vision VI: Redemption at work in Zion [lvi–lxii] — Vision VII: The Day of Judgment [lxiii–lxvi].

Jeremiah: i–vi The Prophet's Call and Manifesto — vii–x Miscellaneous — xi–xiii The Missionary Journey — xiv–xvii The Drought and other prophecies — xviii–xx Discourses founded on Pottery — xxi–xxiii Messages to Rulers — xxiv–xxix Occasional Prophecies — xxx–xxxi Prophecies of Restoration — xxxii–xlv Incidental Prophecies — xlvi–li Doom Prophecies — lii Appendix.

Ezekiel: i–xi Opening of the Message — xii–xiv The Sevenfold Token — xv–xix The Sevenfold Parable — xx. 1–44 Judgment of the Inquiring Elders — xx. 45–xxiv Seven Last Words — xxv–xxxii Doom Prophecies — xxxiii–xlviii The Fall and the Restoration to come.

TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTER X

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

⁂ In the *St. John* volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible.*

St. John's Revelation. (Pages 312–326.)

Prologue: Words to the Seven Churches [i–iii].

First Vision: The Sealed Book and the Lamb [iv–v].

Second Vision: The Seven Seals and the Powers of Judgment [vi–viii. 4].

Third Vision: The Seven Trumpets and Mystery of Prophecy [viii. 5–xi. 18].

Fourth Vision: The Kingdom of the World becoming the Kingdom of Christ [xi. 19–xv. 4].

Fifth Vision: The Seven Golden Bowls; or, Mystery of Babylon [xv. 5–xix. 4].

Sixth Vision: The Word of God and the Thrones of Judgment [xix. 5–xx].

Seventh Vision: The Lamb's Bride, The New Jerusalem [xxi–xxii. 5].

Epilogue: Seven Last Words [xxii from 6].

APPENDIX II

PROGRESSIVE STUDY IN BIBLICAL LITERATURE

I. STORY STAGE

Story is the natural literary food of the mind in its elementary stage. It is moreover characteristic of Hebrew literature that the spirit of its whole history is expressed by stories. Hence the story literature of the Bible should be the commencement of all study for young people, or for others who, for various reasons, are unfamiliar with Scripture. To meet this want two additional volumes of *The Modern Reader's Bible*[1] have been prepared: —

Bible Stories: Old Testament
Bible Stories: New Testament

The stories are in the language of Scripture, altered only by omissions. The arrangement is according to the natural divisions of Bible history: Genesis, The Exodus, The Judges, The Kings and Prophets, The Exile and Return; The Life of Jesus, Acts of the Apostles.[2] To each section there is an introduction, indicating the bearing of the several stories on the general history. A few notes are added. — In the absence of these volumes selection may be made by a teacher with the aid of the preceding Appendix.

Method of Study. — 1. The first duty to a story is to love it, and nothing should interfere with this. — 2. Another use of stories is to light up portions of ancient history: the introduction and notes are intended to assist in this. — 3. Such stories lend themselves to moral and religious comment by the teacher; they make a text book for the study of human life.

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[1] Macmillan, London and New York. Each volume 2/6 (England) 50 cents (America).

[2] Each part may be procured separately in paper covers.

II. MASTERPIECES STAGE

But story is only a single form of literature; other literary forms — oratory, wisdom (or philosophy), lyrics, rhapsody (or drama) — need more study for their appreciation. The best way to appreciate a type of literature is carefully to study a few masterpieces illustrating it. Hence a special volume of *The Modern Reader's Bible* has been prepared: —

Biblical Masterpieces [1]

As the title implies, it is a collection of masterpieces of biblical literature, illustrating five leading forms of literature, with introduction and notes. In this case it is desirable that the whole class should have the volume in their hands, as it is a question, not only of selection, but of the structural printing that represents the exact literary form to the eye.

Method of Study. — The general purpose is to carry familiarity with these selected masterpieces to the furthest point, short of wearying the student. — 1. Memorising is good, if it is not distasteful. — 2. Vocal illustration is a great power in literary study. Every teacher should be a good reader; and the volume may be used as a reading book in the study of elocution. — 3. Use should be made of structural and dramatic reading. For example, in pieces that are fully dramatic the parts of different speakers should be assigned to different members of the class. Or in (e.g.) *Deborah's Song*, boys might take Men's parts and the girls the parts of the Women. In the case of the doom form [e.g. p. 175, or 182] the teacher might read the Divine monologue. while the class give the lyric interruptions. Or in such an ode as that on pages 205–208, the teacher might take the prophet's prelude and postlude, half the class the strophe, the other half the antistrophe, and the whole class the epode. Where there is nothing more than divisions by stanzas, it is well to distribute these among different readers. — Literary effect depends, to a greater degree than many people think, upon the emphasis of structure; and this is the more necessary in biblical literature as the traditional use of Scripture has entirely ignored it.

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[1] Macmillan: English price, 2/6; American, 50 cents.

III. BOOK STAGE

Here the object is to deal with a book of Scripture as a continuous and independent whole. The selection may be left to the taste of teacher or students. Some very miscellaneous books (e.g. *Psalms*, *Proverbs*) hardly lend themselves to this treatment; books of prophecy however, although miscellanies, may be unified by personality of the author. An important principle underlies this stage of literary study: the distinction between what may be called the Interpretation of Exegesis (or Commentary) and the Interpretation of Perspective. The effect of the first is to emphasise details at the expense of the general effect of a literary work. The second lays stress upon successive rapid readings of a work, until difficulties of detail have vanished in the light of the whole. Both are good; but the method of commentary has been over-emphasised in Bible study, until many people think of Scripture as a collection of verses rather than of books.

Method of Study. — 1. Read the book at a single sitting. This is often more practicable than might at first appear, if the book has been prepared for such reading. Thus in *Deuteronomy*, by omitting, or rapidly skimming, the prefatory matter and Book of the Covenant it is possible to bring the essential literature of the book — the orations and songs — within the compass of a single reading. Similarly, it is well to omit the miscellaneous sayings of *Ecclesiastes* in endeavouring to catch the argument of the whole. It is specially advantageous if a teacher can give students their first impressions of a book by an Interpretative Reading, which, by union of quotation, comment, description, brings the whole content in condensed literary force within the limit of a single lesson. — 2. Next study the work in detail, with notes or other aid, seeking to understand everything, but not dwelling too long at a time on any difficulty, lest it grow out of proportion to its place in the general perspective of the book. — 3. Then read the book again at a sitting, and repeat this many times; for the greater the literature is the oftener will it bear reading. I have come across an individual — not a biblical scholar, but a layman — who claimed to have repeated his one-sitting readings of *Job* five hundred times!

IV. LITERATURE STAGE

The student is now prepared to study biblical literature as a whole, or types of literature — lyrics, philosophy, etc. — as wholes. Here choice may be made between two different lines of study, of which I have prepared text books, viz. the present volume, and the larger work entitled *The Literary Study of the Bible.*[1] Both these works cover the same ground: the difference is that the one is shorter and gives more prominence to the matter of Scripture; the other is longer, and lays stress on literary technicalities.

A. Literary Sequence

To this study the present volume is a text book; and the arrangement of reading has been given in the preceding Appendix.

B. Literary Form

For this the text book is *The Literary Study of the Bible: An Account of the Leading Forms of Literature represented in the Sacred Writings.* The natural order of study would be as follows: —

> Preface, Introduction, and Book First: stating and illustrating foundation principles of literature.

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[1] London, Isbister & Co. (price 10/6); Boston, D. C. Heath & Co. (price $2). Second edition, 1899.

[Appendix III on Metrical Structure.]

Book Second: Lyrics: with Table I of Appendix II, so that each division of lyric poetry may be studied in the light of the examples illustrating it.

Book Third: History and Epic: with Tables II and III of Appendix II.

Book Fourth: Rhetoric: with Table VI of Appendix II.

[Table VII of Appendix II: Epic and Lyric Idyl.]

Book Fifth: Wisdom: with Table IV of Appendix II.

Book Sixth: Prophecy: with Table V of Appendix II.

Appendix I, the Literary Index to the Bible, should throughout be kept in view, as giving exact divisions of the literary content of the Bible. This however is superseded if the volumes of *The Modern Reader's Bible* are used, in which all these divisions of structure are presented to the eye.

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